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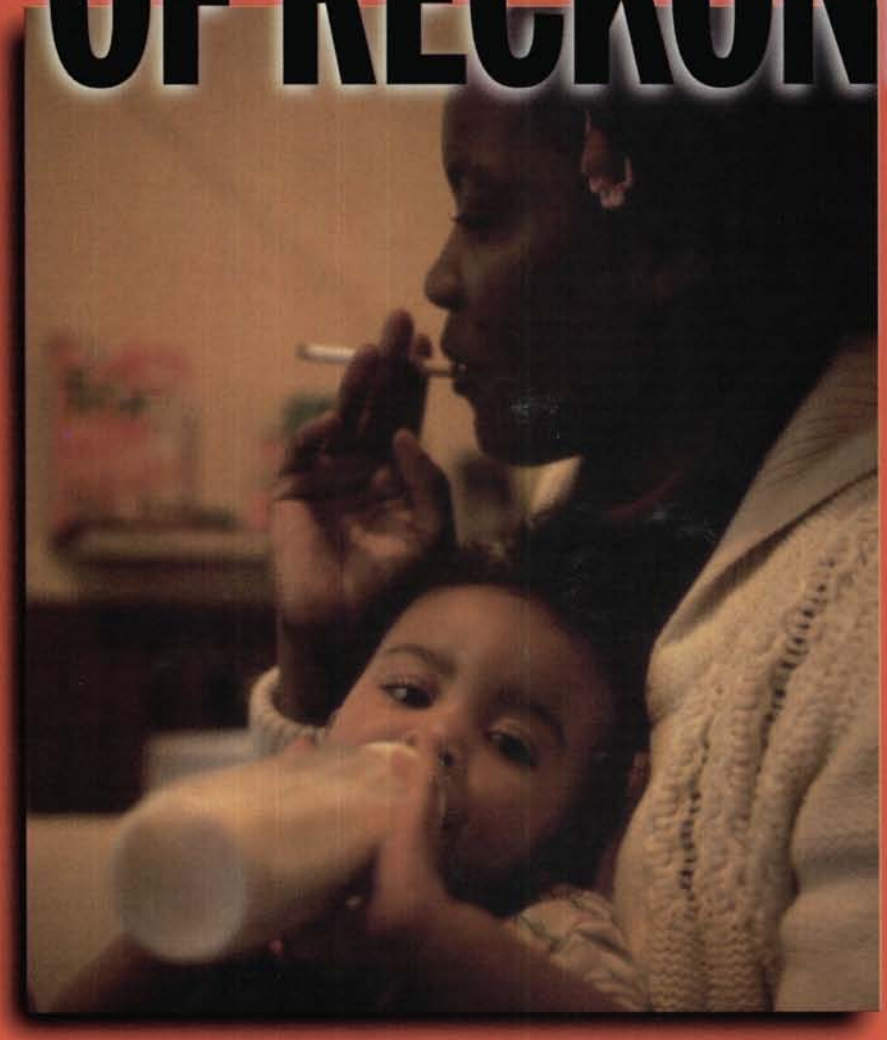

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The Editors

Where Do We Go from Here?

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Debunking the Debunkers

What if the problem with student achievement that we spend so much time talking and worrying about were simply a myth? And what if this myth had been concocted and was being spread by conservatives who want to destroy public education? These are claims put forward by David Berliner and Bruce Biddle in *The Manufactured Crisis,* (Addison-Wesley, 1995). Combining good news with a conspiracy theory makes for compelling reading, but the authors are able to sustain their thesis only by ignoring or distorting evidence that doesn't fit. Lawrence Stedman, a researcher and teacher at the State University of New York-Binghamton, demonstrates this in a couple of careful discussions that appear in *Educational Policy Analysis Archives,* a scholarly electronic journal.

By any reasonable standard, our students are performing poorly.

Stedman agrees with Berliner and Biddle that the alleged decline in U.S. education—often explained by the excesses of the 1960s—never happened. Student achievement, he says, has remained largely unchanged in the past 30 years. But, of course, we may have to do more than stand still. Take the U.S. auto industry. What was good enough to make our cars tops in the world in the 1950s was no longer good enough in the 1980s. The auto industry had to make big changes in order to recover ground from the Japanese. American education is in a similar situation.

How, otherwise, do we explain the fact that over 25 percent of high school seniors taking the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test could not read at what is considered to be a basic level or that 50 percent failed to achieve at a basic level in history? This means, as Stedman points out, that less than half of seniors knew such things as the purpose of the Monroe Doctrine or that the main aim of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War was to prevent the spread of communism.

Student achievement in math is equally dismal. NAEP's own analysis of exams administered in the early 1990s shows that fewer than half of high school seniors "appeared to have a firm grasp of seventh-grade content." Most students are competent at basic procedures such as adding whole numbers or reading line graphs, but many stumble when it comes to even simple problems involving fractions, decimals, and percents.

It is not that NAEP questions are difficult—or irrelevant. The history NAEP asks for the kind of information we would expect citizens to know. And if students cannot do seventh-grade math—a minimum for most jobs—it makes little difference that our test scores are still as good as they were 30 years ago.

Berliner and Biddle attempt to bolster their contention that the education crisis is all on paper by looking at international comparisons. Are U.S. students at the bottom, as we often hear? Not at all, according to Berliner and Biddle. In fact, they are at the top—or, if they are not, it is because they are being compared with elite groups of students from other countries or tested on material that they have not covered in school. Stedman agrees with them that U.S. students do well in reading and elementary school science, but he points out that Berliner and Biddle can support these conclusions for high school science and math only by extremely selective use of the evidence.

Take the second international IEA math study, for example. Many countries had enrollment rates in math for 12th graders that were similar to ours, and most of these countries outperformed the U.S. In some cases, countries with higher enrollment rates performed better than the U.S. Hungary, for example, which enrolled about half of its 12th graders in math, scored about the same as the U.S., which enrolled only 13 percent. In the second international science study in the mid 1980s, the U.S. actually had more selective 12th-grade course enrollments than most countries and still achieved more poorly in chemistry, physics, and biology.

The Manufactured Crisis has been warmly received by educators all over the country. No wonder. They are human, too, and they are tired of hearing bad news about public education. But, as Stedman shows, they are just kidding themselves if they go along with Berliner and Biddle's insistence that our biggest problem is thinking that we have a problem. Stedman does not find much evidence for the conspiracy theory, either. It is true that people who want to privatize public education, perhaps by introducing vouchers, are exploiting the difficulties with student achievement. But the fact that conservatives exploit these problems is no evidence that conservatives have manufactured them. Neither do problems with achievement lead inexorably to vouchers. When conservatives point to the high levels of achievement in other countries, they never mention that none of these countries use vouchers. Why don't we try instead to emulate their successful public school systems?

Lawrence Stedman's two critiques of *The Manufactured Crisis* and David Berliner and Bruce Biddle's rejoinder can be accessed in Volume 4 of *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*. The address on the World Wide Web is: http://seamonkey.ed.asu.edu/epaa/

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Cover by Eric Baker for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Photo by Louis Psihoyos. Articles on pages 7, 12 and 19.

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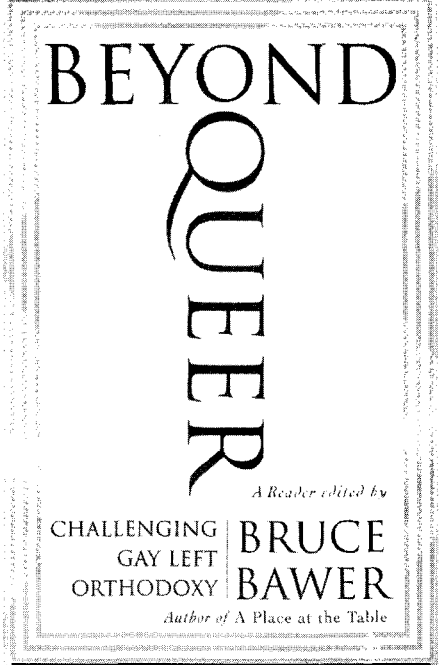

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Piece now

To the editors:

While I appreciate both the compliment (describing me as sitting "at the center of an influential policy-making circle") and the promotion (referring to me as an august president, rather than a humble executive director), it is important to note the errors of fact and logic in Jacob Heilbrunn's "The Arabist" (July 8).

First, after informing readers of such details as the Zionist historical derivation of the name of one of the purported "Jewish Arabists," Heilbrunn got two of the other three wrong—Richard Haass's name was misspelled and Daniel Kurtzer was given an incorrect forename.

Second, after reporting that James Baker gave Dennis Ross "free rein to put into practice" the latter's theories of negotiation, which included the concept that "public conferences and grand gestures were off the map," Heilbrunn seems to have overlooked the fact that the grandest gesture and most public peacemaking conference in modern Middle East history—the Madrid peace conference—took place on the Baker/Ross watch.

Third, Heilbrunn noted that "Israel, Syria, Egypt and the PLO" met at the Madrid peace conference, apparently failing to recall that the PLO was nowhere to be found at Madrid; that's one of the main reasons that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir agreed to participate.

Fourth, Heilbrunn closes his article with an admonition that "real [peace] agreements [in the Middle East must] await the fundamental opening of nondemocratic regimes." In so doing, he seems blind to the fact that Israelis—especially Israeli soldiers—have enjoyed seventeen years of peace with Egypt and a shorter but no less fulfilling two years of peace with Jordan, two countries that cannot be called "democracies" by any definition of the term. While neither peace is perfect—with the Israel-Egypt peace leaving particularly much to be desired—there are remarkably few Israelis of any political persuasion that would trade the current state of peace on the Jordanian or Egyptian fronts for a state of war.

Lastly, Shimon Peres's historic contributions to Israel's search for peace and security notwithstanding, Heilbrunn's description of the Washington Institute as "buy[ing] Shimon Peres's vision of a new Middle East that transcends old hatreds through economic cooperation" only shows that he has read few of our publications, attended few of our events and interviewed few—if any—of our research staff (certainly not me). As a research and educational foundation established to promote informed debate on the contemporary Middle East and U.S. policy, the Washington Institute is proud to have hosted both Prime Minister Peres and then-Opposition Leader (now Prime Minister) Benjamin Netanyahu in recent months, along with the president of Turkey, senior ministers from Jordan and Oman, the U.S. secretaries of state and defense and leading thinkers from every corner of the region; the authors of our publications run the gamut from Republicans to Democrats, from Labor partisans to Likud supporters, from Israelis to Egyptians to Jordanians. In short, the Middle East is simply too complex a place to "buy" any single person's interpretation of the past or assessment of the present, let alone a "vision" of the future.

ROBERT SATLOFF
Executive Director,
The Washington Institute
for Near East Policy
Washington, D.C.

Not annulled

To the editors:

Yehoshua Porath of the Hebrew University ("Antisocial Text," July 8) cites an impressive body of evidence to demonstrate that the PLO has still not changed its National Covenant, which calls for the destruction of Israel and urges violence against Israel.

In the meantime, another important piece of evidence has emerged. Peace Watch, the non-partisan Israeli organization that monitors compliance with the Oslo accords, recently obtained and released an official internal PLO document which states that the PLO National Covenant has not been changed. The document is an official position paper on the Covenant, prepared and circulated by the "Research and Thought Department" of Fatah, Yasir Arafat's faction of the PLO.

Explaining the recent decision by the PLO's Palestine National Council regarding the Covenant, the document says that changing the Covenant would have been "suicide for the PLO," and therefore the Covenant was only "frozen, not annulled." The document continues: "The text of the Palestinian National Covenant remains as it was and no changes whatsoever were made to it.... The drafting of the new National Covenant will take into account the extent of Israeli fulfillment of its previous and

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coming obligations ... [e]vil and corrupt acts are expected from the Israeli side.... The fact that the Council did not hold a special session to make changes and amendments in the text of the National Covenant at this stage ... was done to defend the new Covenant from being influenced by the current Israeli dictatorship."

MORTON A. KLEIN
President,
Zionist Organization of America
Washington, D.C.

Shalom's haver

To the editors:

TNR's editorial on June 24, "Revolt of the Masses," incorrectly reported that a group of Hollywood stars had endorsed Prime Minister Shimon Peres's re-election bid. In fact, the ad—which was signed by members of the arts and entertainment community—was an open letter to Dor Shalom, a group of Israeli young people who have tried to keep alive the vision of peace and a brighter future in the aftermath of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. Peres's name never appeared in the ad.

The ad's signatories believed that a letter of support to youth in search of peace was a meaningful and appropriate way to express their convictions about peace, much in the same way that you would consider an editorial in TNR to be helpful or timely. The decision not to become more directly involved in the election campaign was a conscious one, which makes the TNR editorial all the more unfortunate.

This is not to say that Dor Shalom, which as a non-profit organization did *not* endorse a particular party or candidate, had no interest in using the ad to encourage young people to "vote peace." It obviously did. But even in this regard, it is incorrect to categorically equate a vote for peace with a vote for Peres, as you do. Both candidates for prime minister promised to keep a peace process going, albeit at different paces. It is difficult to believe that a statement by twenty-three "celebrities" would sway many people from one candidate to another. More likely, as those signing the letter intended, the ad encouraged Israelis not to give up on peace at this pivotal time.

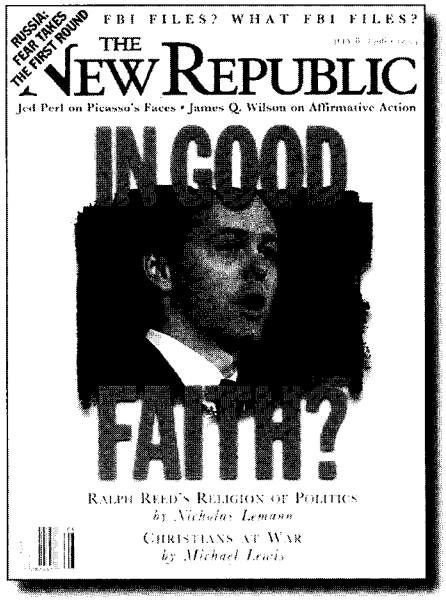
DONNA BOJARSKY
Dreyfuss/James Productions
Los Angeles, California

Law of return

To the editors:

Although I can generally agree with Professor James Q. Wilson's analysis of affirmative action ("Sins of Admission," July 8), he has overlooked one important justification for affirmative action in professional schools.

African American and Mexican-American graduates of law and medical schools are far more likely to practice in African American and Mexican-American communities than are Caucasian and Asian American graduates. Further, the residents of those communities generally prefer the assistance of professionals from their own communities, who instinctively understand the nature of their problems and, in many cases, quite literally speak their own language. While there are trade-offs involved like everything else, the trade-off is between a lowering of excellence in the professional schools and assuring an adequate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level of professional services to large segments of our citizens. I think that this latter is particularly a responsibility of our public universities, like the University of California System. The tricky part is in striking an appropriate balance.

DAVID FALK
College Park, Maryland

Divide and conquer

To the editors:

Like virtually everybody else in the debate over racial gerrymandering (including most of the Supreme Court), Jeffrey Rosen ("Sandramandered," July 8) misses the point. The problem is not racial (or partisan, or incumbent protection) districting. It is districting.

Overcoming its initial reluctance to entering the "political thicket," the Court thirty years ago held that all districts for a given legislative body had to contain as nearly as possible the same number of people. The basis for this holding, said Chief Justice Warren, was that every citizen had a Fourteenth Amendment right to cast an "equally weighted vote." Unfortunately, the Court has refused to follow the logical implications of this theory. So long as we continue to use a single member district, winner take all electoral system, some citizens' votes (those who vote for the winning candidate) are going to weigh more than others. Such a system inevitably gives the majority party more than its share of seats, and it becomes possible for a candidate to win an election when his positions on virtually any individual issue are opposed by a majority of voters.

Even allowing a computer to draw a totally "random" district does not solve the problem. Voters find themselves divided arbitrarily on the basis of geography. Groups concentrated geographically can elect representatives. Those scattered across boundary lines (deliberately or randomly) cannot. Only a system of proportional representation will come close to achieving the ideal of an "equally weighted vote." Such a system allows the citizens to choose with whom they will group themselves for electoral purposes. We would avoid the problem of whether blacks would be better off as a majority in a few districts or as a sizable minority in a larger number of "influence districts." They would be left to make that decision for themselves.

H. COLEMAN MCGINNIS
Nashville, Tennessee

Undetected

To the editors:

It is good for the soul to read John B. Judis's heroic investigative journalism "Loathing in Las Vegas" (July 15 & 22), which clears Senator Phil Gramm from an attempted smear linking him to membership in the Ku Klux Klan. But, alas, this noble venture is tainted because Judis brings in polygraphy as a tool to accomplish that end. One cannot quarrel with the intimidating nature of an imposing polygraph operator, armed with his instrument, to get a person to confess. This, however, has nothing to do with the polygraph machine, and everything to do with the polygrapher himself. He is the equivalent of a good lawyer conducting a cross-examination. The polygraph, extensively discredited by abysmal failures, is the ultimate deception from the claims for the effectiveness of lie detection using modern technology. For the sake of credibility, Judis should have thus qualified his use of polygraphy in his otherwise excellent article.

ELIE A. SHNEOUR
San Diego, California

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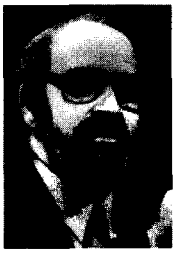

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

AUGUST 12, 1996

SIGN IT

In September, 1983, on the twentieth anniversary of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington, the editors of this magazine suggested that the continued social and economic progress of black Americans required acknowledging the existence of

> generation upon generation of excluded, hopeless, chronically dependent people.... There is an epidemic—the metaphor of pathology is not inappropriate, for what is involved is the health of the black community—of single-parent families, unmarried mothers, deserting fathers.... Forty-one percent of black families are headed by women, without husbands present, up almost a third in the last decade.... The percentage of black children living in one-parent homes rose from 32 percent to 49 percent in the same period.... This is a demographic disaster, nothing less.

That 1983 editorial was moderately heretical, a leading indicator of the general mid-'80s reawakening of Americans to the problems of the largely black, largely urban "underclass." Now, some thirteen years later, concern about the underclass is a political cliché. Yet what has been done? Today, the percentage of black children living in single-parent homes is not 49 percent. It is 69 percent. In 1990, one out of every four young African American men was in prison, in jail, on probation or on parole. Today, the figure is one in three.

This is the context in which President Clinton must decide whether to sign the radical welfare reform measure being sent to him by Congress. Why, after all, do we care about welfare? Not for fiscal reasons; Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the main welfare program, consumes only about 1 percent of the federal budget. We care because welfare is implicated in America's gravest social problem, the existence of isolated, depressed neighborhoods, the vast majority either black or Hispanic, where intact families and working fathers are practically nonexistent. You can argue about welfare's role in creating this underclass, but there is little doubt that welfare *sustains* it.

Change the welfare system, and the underclass will change, too. This has been the great hope of radical welfare reformers, left and right. It was also the hope of Bill Clinton during the 1992 campaign, when he pledged not simply to "end welfare as we know it," but to use welfare reform to "break the culture of poverty and dependence" in the nation's ghettos. Clinton's welfare proposal, belatedly unveiled in 1994, would have required work, even of single mothers, after two or three years on the dole. If private-sector work was unavailable, community service jobs (and child care) would have been provided.

We supported Clinton's plan and hoped he would pass it before pursuing his ambitious health care reform. He didn't. We wish it were the bill he is now being asked to sign. It isn't. Instead, a Republican Congress is sending him a bill that replaces AFDC with "block grants" for states to spend on aid programs of their own devising. Readers of responsible editorial pages know by now that this block grant approach is "dead wrong" (*The Washington Post*), even "an obscene act of social regression" (Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, quoted approvingly by *The New York Times*). Several of our own contributors this week agree (see "Welfare: Where Do We Go from Here?" page 19).

So why should Clinton sign it? Not because all the liberal complaints are unjustified. The bill is, as of this writing, a nasty piece of work in many respects—made nastier by the cynical desire of some Republicans to bait Clinton into a politically damaging veto. But it has one virtue that overrides its flaws: it will, finally, start the process by which America's underclass problem can be solved.

AFDC, the press has noted with some drama, dates from 1935—although Franklin Delano Roosevelt could hardly have imagined that the tiny cash aid program hidden in the New Deal's massive structure would one day sustain more than 4 million single mothers, half of them never married. AFDC is an "entitlement." Congress guarantees that if a poor single mother shows up in State X, the federal government will send State X extra money to pay for the aid (be it welfare or workfare) that mother requires.

Entitlements have their virtues. Unlike a fixed-sum block grant, an entitlement program continuously redistributes money to those states with the greatest need. It automatically spends more money during recessions, helping stabilize the national economy. States are encouraged to set generous benefit levels because the federal government shares any extra cost—blunting the tendency of states to compete at being inhospitable to the poor (the so-called "race to the bottom").

It's also true that most of the current conservative boasts about block grants are far from convincing. We do not believe, for example, that state governments are

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so efficient that vast administrative savings will be realized if only Washington butts out of the antipoverty business. Nor are states so different that no "one-size-fits-all" national welfare plan can do the job. ("Wisconsin is not like Delaware," one governor told Congress.) The forces responsible for creating the underclass—racial segregation, the migration of jobs and the middle class to the suburbs—are pretty much the same nationwide. Wisconsin's ghettos *are* like Delaware's ghettos. In designing a program to employ and assimilate the underclass, there is every reason to expect that one size will, in fact, fit all.

We just don't know what size that is. And there is the single compelling justification for block grants: they allow the sort of radical state experimentation that will, within a few years, tell us what works and what doesn't. In a block grant regime, some states will try replacing welfare with public service jobs, child care and health care, as Wisconsin plans to do. Some will try more of the "human capital" training schemes that Moynihan bet on in his 1988 reform (and that so far have failed). Some will allow recipients a couple of years of cash before work is required. Some will try the Contract with America's "cold turkey" time limit on any sort of aid. It's unlikely, but a state might even end cash aid altogether and spend its block grant dollars on, say, a massive campaign to counsel poor teens against unwed motherhood.

We suspect that something like Wisconsin's costly approach of replacing cash welfare with last resort public jobs will prove the winning formula. But nobody knows for sure because it hasn't been tried. We don't know if a public jobs program will inevitably degenerate into makework. We don't know what portion of the welfare caseload (a tenth? a third?) just can't hack working, even in a public job. We don't know if, as hoped, tough work requirements for single mothers will really cause young women to delay pregnancy until marriage.

And what of the harsher "cold turkey" time limit schemes? Moynihan has predicted "3.5 million children on the streets," largely because the bill contains what appears to be a five-year time limit on assistance. But this cutoff, heavily featured in press coverage, is phony. It bans states only from using federal money to pay for benefits beyond five years. States could use their own money for the benefits and spend the federal dollars somewhere else—an accounting shuffle. (A big flaw in the much-cited administration study predicting a rise in child poverty is its unwarranted assumption that states will actually cut off poor families after five years.)

In all likelihood, even conservative governors will prove relatively cautious when it comes to cutoffs, since voters will not reward politicians whose polices result in women and children living on the streets. The Clinton administration has also won concessions requiring states to keep spending their own money on the poor ("maintenance of effort") and providing a $2 billion "contingency fund" for use during recessions.

Do the bills contain enough money to replace cash welfare with work? Probably not—though again, no one really knows. It costs more to provide a single mother with a job, supervision and child care than to send her a check. On the other hand, the mere threat of work may cause people to leave the rolls for private jobs, freeing up some of the necessary money. What is clear is that the bill (as of this writing) contains at least $2 billion more for work programs than current law. David Ellwood of Harvard, Clinton's former top welfare expert, estimates that there will be enough money to finance real, work-oriented reforms in those states that now spend a lot of their own money on welfare, but not enough in low-spending states. Assuming he's right, many states—New York, California and Michigan among them—will have enough money to give work a chance. If it becomes clear that successful reform requires more cash, low-spending states will begin to demand federal help. Given the current political and budget climate, that is the most realistic strategy for eventually getting adequate funding for work-based reform.

Opponents of the bill claim that states can conduct all the experiments they need under waivers from the Department of Health and Human Services. And it's true that Clinton has given states unprecedented freedom. It's also true that most state governors haven't undertaken even those work-oriented reforms that HHS would clearly permit. But that's the point. In the current regime, governors can make a fuss about minor state-initiated improvements in AFDC while blaming the feds for the larger failure to end the misery of the ghettos. A block grant regime forces each governor, and each state legislature, to take full responsibility for designing a welfare system—and for its impact on the underclass. If the block grant bill fails, on the other hand, there's no guarantee HHS won't stop granting waivers at some point in the future.

Democrats blew their chance at reforming welfare in 1994. Now it's the Republicans' bill or nothing. Putting off the issue until the next Congress means new complications and probably years of delay. If Clinton is re-elected, he will feel less political pressure for reform. Republicans may abandon their fragile block grant consensus and wander off to join Senator Dan Coats's give-the-money-to-private-charity faction. We've postponed radical welfare reform before, and the result has always been that reform never happens.

Clinton should continue to negotiate to correct the worst flaws in the current bill—the excessive cuts in benefits to legal immigrants, the threat (blunted in the Senate version, at least) to the antipoverty floor provided by the Food Stamp program. But ultimately he has to decide. Does he agree to a block grant structure that may cause some hardship, but is likely to point the way to ending the "culture of poverty"? Or does he continue with today's incremental reforms, most of which, even Moynihan concedes, are "not wildly successful"? This isn't an easy decision, but we don't think it is, in the end, a close one. The continuing agony of the underclass is destroying our cities, our race relations, our sense of civility, our faith in the possibilities of government. It's worth taking some risks to end it. •

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NOTEBOOK

BATHOS IN FIRST-CLASS: We are all struggling for words about the destruction of TWA Flight 800, and *The New Yorker* has found some. Grief, it turns out, has a demographic. "For anyone who flies to Paris often," writes Adam Gopnik, who elsewhere in the issue of July 29 compares the Valentino show in Paris to the Schleswig-Holstein question, "TWA Flight 800, departing from Kennedy at 7 p.m., was the 5:31 from Grand Central to Bronxville.... The ritual was as regular as any ritual could be, both in its predictable small annoyances and in the large excitement waiting at the end.... Flight 800 was late a lot, but TWA, trying hard, would pass around cold jumbo shrimp in the lounge and send the captain out to reassure the passengers. His tones consoled; his promises appeased; the shrimp nourished." And then, tragedy. May all that Montrachet find peace in the sea.

PRIVATE AFFAIR: Yes, we know, it's too early to say for sure that terrorists bombed TWA Flight 800. But it's not too early to re-examine the rules governing airport security. JFK Airport took a pass on installing federally approved baggage scanners because it wasn't required of them and because, at $1 million, it was too expensive. We're all for turning certain government tasks over to the private sector, but sometimes reason suggests we do the reverse. If free-market logic dictates endangering lives, maybe it's time for the government to step in. We don't privatize the fire department, either.

HOME OF THE PEACOCK: Does NBC think its millions of Olympic viewers aren't really very interested in watching great feats of athleticism? As usual, the network has peppered its coverage with slick shorts that reduce every competitor's story to a melodramatic cliché. It's so easy you can do it yourself. Start with an athlete and a personal tragedy (devastating injury; parents' divorce; failure to win better than a silver medal). Send him or her along a road to recovery (spends every day for four years in the gym; finds a new coach; takes a long, hard look at himself). Pursue a new goal (winning the gold, winning the gold, winning the gold). Slather the whole thing in the unctuous tones of John Tesh's baritone. Presto!—your own Olympic moment. A little melodrama wouldn't be so bad. But do they all have to be the *same* melodrama?

AND THEY SAY DOCTORS ARE HEARTLESS:

A Promising Medical Specialty Emerges to Help Torture Victims

—*The New York Times*, July 9
(Thanks to Patrick C. O'Reilly of Brooklyn, New York.)

WHAT'S FAIR ISN'T FAIR: Joining the craze of groups funneling outside money to political parties, a gaggle of pro-Republican businesses have banded together to fund pro-GOP campaign spots. But not all outside expenditures are equal, as someone ought to let *The Washington Post* know. An article in the July 21 *Post* said in the first paragraph, "Business groups that have criticized unions for using membership dues to finance televised attacks on Republicans are using similar tactics to finance a counterattack." But are the tactics really that similar? The AFL-CIO is using *mandatory* dues from union members—40 percent of whom identify themselves as Republicans—to assail the GOP. The business coalition's ads are funded by *voluntary* contributions. Lower down, the article mentions that business groups are only "seeking voluntary contributions," although it then immediately quotes an AFL-CIO official accusing businesses of "hypocrisy." Chalk up another one for journalistic "balance."

WILL THE SHIRT OFF HIS BACK BE NEXT?

U.S. judge removed from suit

—*The Chicago Tribune*, July 19
(Thanks to Gerald Grusin of Chicago, Illinois.)

WIDOW'S PIQUE: "Commemorative Ceremony Set for Vince Foster on Anniversary of Death," read the fax that spilled into TNR's offices last week. A day at Fort Marcy Park would feature an invocation, a eulogy, speeches and a final benediction for the White House aide who took his own life in 1993. "[L]et's not forget Vince Foster's widow, Lisa Foster, the other victim in all of this." A welcome touch of humanity, this willingness to treat Foster as a man and not the political football his body has become. But wait: the fine print. "Purpose: To remember the death of Foster on July 20, 1993, and to ask for an end to the coverup of his murder," the fax read at the bottom. Murder? Even those on the rightmost fringe of the legitimate political spectrum—the Lauch Faircloths of the world—don't maintain that Foster was murdered. This turns out to be the handiwork of the fringe Clinton Investigative Commission, a vile fund-raising group that deals in direct-mail propaganda and whose leader claims to have had a secret meeting with Hillary Clinton in the streets of Washington. In other words, these are the people who have tried harder than anyone else to ensure that Lisa Foster, "the other victim in all of this," continues to be victimized by nutty, vindictive conspiracy-mongering about her husband's death. •

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QUOGUE POSTCARD

PERSONAL EFFECTS

By Roger Rosenblatt

On the Saturday morning after the TWA crash, the air on the South Shore of Long Island has suddenly become clear and colder, the sunlight so intense it seems to probe under the leaves and between the blades of sea grass, as if on a search mission of the area. Twelve miles out in the Atlantic off East Moriches, Coast Guard cutters roll in high swells. Divers could not work yesterday because of the fog and rain, but they can tramp around the ocean floor today, hoping to recover pieces of the 747.

The wind has already borne a great deal of debris eastward, toward where I live during the summer, in the village of Quogue, and further east toward Southampton. The way the ocean sweeps flotsam along, they could be finding objects washed up in Montauk, forty miles away.

I walk the beach in Quogue, which, quite untypically, looks like a flea market of debris. Most of the items stuck in the sand did not come from the exploded airplane, but were generated by Bertha, the tropical storm of the previous week, which, while not technically a hurricane, was impressive enough to wash up the entire breadth of this 200-foot-wide, normally pristine beach, and spew beer cans, plastic cups and ribbons and deflated balloons from somebody's birthday party.

But there are items that undoubtedly did come from the plane, such as serving trays and some personal effects: an imitation alligator eyeglass case, torn on one side; a black, one-size-fits-all baseball cap; a boy's gray shirt, size medium; a red plastic toothbrush that looks as good as new.

High up on the unusually brown sand, I come upon the remnants of a woman's rust-red sweater. Someone has discovered it before me and has weighted it down with a two-by-four. Citizens have been asked to mark recovered materials in that way so that official investigators can examine them. The lightweight merino wool fabric is worn thin from being in the salt water. About half the sweater has been ripped away. What remains is one complete sleeve and part of the front, but there is enough here to suggest that the woman who wore it was small.

The sweater is enmeshed in a dark cluster of seaweed and reeds, so its off-red color looks especially bright in contrast. John Millington Synge wrote that the most beautiful thing in the world is a red rag on a hedge—a fragment of human life clinging like a memory to nature, or vice versa. The picture created by this juxtaposition, he said, was of "the splendid desolation of decay." I recall the quotation as a kind of intellectual reflex, but feel only sorrow.

On Friday afternoon, I met, in a stationery store in East Moriches, a man who was at the end of his rope. He was one of the first to get out to the crash site on Wednesday night. A construction contractor in his early 50s, he had a fine open face, though his blue eyes were full of grief. He and a friend had gone out in a whaler ahead of the Coast Guard. He confessed that the two of them were almost exhilarated at the prospect of pulling survivors out of the dark water.

"We saw floating bodies, two or three," he said, "but we let them pass. We were looking for the living. After awhile, we knew that nobody had made it, so we started pulling in the dead. I brought up a woman whose legs were missing. I've seen dead people before, but nothing like that. The Coast Guard sure hadn't seen anything like it. Nobody says this, but 'the Coast Guard' means 18- and 19-year-old kids. When they came upon the bodies they were screaming into their radios for help."

He said he didn't know why, but he couldn't stop talking about what he saw out there. He said that his friend hadn't slept a minute since Wednesday. "We found two more ladies. They were naked." He spoke with both a hushed respect and puzzlement. "It was not like their clothes were burned off," he said. "But they were naked. How does that happen?"

Since Wednesday night, the people of this area have either watched the news or become part of it. All have been affected by it. A bulky man who runs the liquor store in East Moriches told me that he would be enraged if it turned out that the downing of the plane was the work of terrorists, but said that all he could feel at the moment was a sadness so inexpressible it brought him to tears.

Like most everyone in East Moriches, Center Moriches, Speonk and the other towns in the middle of Long Island, he is an ordinary working-class American. But his despairing tone of voice is no different from members of the more pampered vacationer class in Westhampton, Quiogue and Quogue. Everyone feels a kinship with the victims, and perhaps suddenly with everyone else.

"I cannot bear to watch the families anymore," said a woman who lives here. "The bodies are so badly decomposed they are unrecognizable. They say they recovered over a hundred, but who are they? That man who lost his wife and daughters. That man who was about to be married in Paris.... "

Tire tracks run the full length of the Quogue beach, creating a highway of pebbles and broken shells between them. Flags at the beachfront houses fly at half-staff. The water is the dark silver-gray color of oceans in war movies—an ominous, undulating field.

I study the rust-red sweater one more time before I

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move on. I reach down and take a small section of it between my thumb and index finger, rubbing it the way a child rubs a security blanket. The fabric is worn so thin, it nearly comes apart to the touch. Held up to the fierce sunlight, the stitching becomes a spider web, a gauze, a lattice-work wall. The end of the sleeve catches my eye, and I hold that for a while, my hand enveloping the point where the sweater embraced a wrist. I look at it without thought, and let it drop.

This is the picture here at the end of the week: sand, ocean, the detritus of a disaster and people walking up and down, nodding to one another as they pass. •

Would you defend Karadzic?

L.A. LAWLESS

By Jan Breslauer

"It is not only a great honor, but also a great challenge, for an advocate to aid this tribunal in its task."
—Defense counsel Hans Rolfe, *Judgment at Nuremberg*

Poor Abby Mann. Somebody's cribbed a page from his screenplay. A few weeks ago, Edward Medvene announced he would defend Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic at his war crimes tribunal in The Hague. (General Ratko Mladic, the other main defendant, will be tried separately.) Perhaps inevitably, the Los Angeles lawyer sounded as if he were trying out for *Judgment at Nuremberg*. "You have to do what you think is right," the former federal prosecutor, 65, told *The Los Angeles Times*. "I just think it's the highest calling to represent someone that so many people have prejudged." Similarly, he told *The New York Times* that he took the case "because of the immense challenge it affords." What he wouldn't and still won't say is how much he's getting. Then, having fed the dailies their soundbites, Medvene and his co-counsel, banking specialist Thomas F. Hanley III, declined to speak further, including for this article.

L.A. was a natural place for Karadzic to shop for a lawyer. Shame is scarce, and well-off, well-groomed attorneys have had their own Steven Bochco TV series. Medvene's firm, Mitchell, Silberberg & Knupp, one of the leading entertainment firms in the city, has a long record of representing the movie studios. Medvene himself is also on the Ronald Goldman family's team in the civil suit against O.J. Simpson, a claim that gives him a certain Tinseltown cachet.

Reportedly, when a go-between first approached him about taking Karadzic's case, Medvene insisted on meeting him first. The lawyer then received several phone calls from Karadzic, and in late June he and Hanley, who belongs to a firm with commercial connections in the Balkans, boarded a flight to Belgrade. From there the men drove five hours to Pale to meet with Karadzic. After two days of meetings, Medvene agreed to take the case.

Despite some experience with unseemly clients—in the 1980s, Medvene defended Ruben Zuno Arce, who was accused of arranging the 1985 kidnap-murder of a U.S. drug agent, as well as Gary Hart's money-man David Stein, tried on charges of campaign finance violations—much of his career has been an exercise in true-blue liberalism. A quarter-century ago, he won a landmark case that mandated busing in the L.A. schools—a decision that spawned a generation of white anxiety and right-wing victories at the polls. More recently, he successfully defended the right of the Los Angeles Ethics Commission to go after junior-grade Craig Livingstons in the city bureaucracy.

"He's one of the really terrific trial lawyers in town, an exceptional cross-examiner, extremely dedicated and a fighter," says attorney Richard Mosk, who's known Medvene since the early '60s. "He's had some family tragedies and has overcome them. He's a traditional liberal." On the Karadzic case, Mosk has sympathy for his colleague's position. "You get asked questions like 'Would you represent Hitler?' and those are tough questions. If you represent a defendant in a capital case in this country, or a serial killer, [the Karadzic case] is just an extension of that. Or at least that's one way to look at it. I see nothing wrong with representing him, nothing inappropriate."

Yet the Karadzic case can't be so easily dismissed with a restatement of the liberal, lawyerly commitment to representation for all. Michael J. Bazyler, professor of international law at Whittier College of Law in L.A., says he absolutely wouldn't defend Karadzic. "Every defendant, no matter how heinous the crime, is entitled to representation," he says. "But they're not entitled to be represented by me." The son of Holocaust survivors, Bazyler says, "I could not put my feelings aside." But Bazyler is hardly alone in these sentiments. Several practicing attorneys, Jewish and Gentile, said off-the-record that they would have refused such a case. "I wouldn't have defended Hitler, either," said one.

While Medvene certainly believes that Karadzic deserves representation, he isn't shy about publicity either. His historical propensity to turn up in high-profile litigations is probably no accident, and it would be in character for him to try to redeem his personal fifteen minutes of fame after a spell outside the limelight. As he told the *L.A. Times*: "It's a chance to participate in history."

Medvene has forged ahead with two arguments in Karadzic's defense, both of which, in true lawyerly fashion, skirt the moral issues involved. First, in a motion filed before the three-judge tribunal in The Hague on July 5, Medvene argued that the publicity surrounding the case had deprived Karadzic of due process—in

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effect, that because the press has screamed about Karadzic's role in the Muslim genocide, he shouldn't be held accountable for it. This argument suggests that the tribunal judges, who sit without a jury, aren't the blank slates the defense would like them to be.

But that kind of thinking, as they say in L.A., falls one taco short of a combo plate. "The tribunal was painstakingly set up, with all kinds of due process guarantees," says William Walker, an attorney with Coudert Brothers, a firm specializing in international law. "There's a lot of careful selection that went into picking the judges. This tribunal is going to be trying Serbs, Croats and Muslims, too. They are pursuing warrants from all three sides." Adds Bazyler, "These judges are not sitting from countries that were the victims of what the Serbs and Croats did. The judges on this tribunal do not take marching orders."

Medvene's second argument speaks to precedent: "[The] doctrine of command responsibility [for war crimes] has never been used before against a civilian political leader," he told *The New York Times*. Again, the logic is not universally embraced. "You don't need to be wearing a uniform to be an international war criminal," says Bazyler, who's currently representing a Jewish torture victim in a suit against the government of Argentina. "It's not a question of military versus civilian. It's a question of people who were in power. There's nothing in international law that says only military officials can be tried." Had Hitler lived, would he have been spared trial?

JAN BRESLAUER writes for *The Los Angeles Times*.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

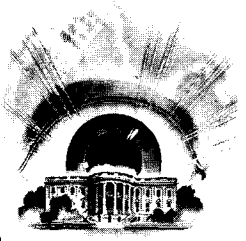
WHERE DO I SIGN?

By Matthew Cooper

Policy evolves in strange ways. Consider Bill Clinton's longtime promise to get people off of welfare in two years. Sounds sensible enough. But why two years? Why not three? Or one? The two-year figure had no special genesis. It came about one night in late 1991 when Bruce Reed, then a 31-year-old adviser to Governor Clinton, sat in his Washington, D.C., office cobbling together a speech for the presidential candidate to deliver at Georgetown University. This was to be a major policy speech, the attention-getting kind. So Reed pushed for a good line on welfare reform. He drew from a paper by David Ellwood, the Harvard professor, that analyzed the possibility of an eighteen- to thirty-six-month limit on cash benefits for welfare recipients. Reed more or less split the difference and came up with two years.

Nearly five years later, the Congress has taken a dramatic step toward making Reed's armchair mathematics the law of the land. Both houses of Congress have now passed major welfare reform and the question is: What now? Will a bill come to pass? Given the shaky history of welfare reform, any bet would be risky. The odds are for passage—but by the barest of margins.

The president's men would love to have welfare reform in their pocket going into the election. Internal White House polls by Mark Penn echo public polls: welfare reform is overwhelmingly popular. That the current bill may pass without Bob Dole's help makes enacting it all the more delicious. Many House Republican freshmen are making the same calculation. With few solid legislative accomplishments to run on, they'd also love to be able to say they delivered. The president's polls show Clinton does have an out: he could veto the welfare bill and denounce it as Gingrichesque, extremist. One confidential Democratic poll shows Clinton with a 24 percent lead with the public when it comes to the question of who they "trust to reform welfare." Still, the president would rather sign.



Getting to Yes will be tough. The White House is trying hard to make sure that the joint House-Senate conference that takes up the bill will come up with something closer to the kinder, gentler Senate version. Chief of Staff Leon Panetta and congressional liaison John Hilley, a former aide to Tom Daschle, will lead the charge with the conferees. Their problem: hardly anyone on the GOP side is willing to soften the bill in any way, and most want to toughen it. Trent Lott and other GOP leaders are putting a lot of heat on to keep the bill hard-line. If anything, the bill is likely to drift toward the harsher House version. Not surprisingly, Bob Dole's camp is quietly encouraging the GOP to saddle Clinton with a tough bill. That way, if the president signs the measure, the GOP can rightly claim credit for having pushed him into their camp. If he vetoes it, they can clobber him.

The White House seems to have made its peace with signing some version of this bill—if it's not too severe. Surprisingly, there is now relatively little debate on this point. A couple of weeks ago, though, it was different. Leon Panetta and George Stephanopoulos, say sources, were considered the most wary of what the Congress would come up with and most receptive to a flat-out veto. Panetta, say those close to him, was particularly wary of the efforts being made to cut Food Stamps. But the Senate passed amendments that kept Food Stamps from being chopped up and shipped off to the states, the way Aid to Families with Dependent Children will be. According to friends of Panetta, this concession was said to have gone a long way toward making the chief of staff—who once, after all, represented John Steinbeck's parcel of agrarian California—a believer that an acceptable bill could be had. (The reluctance of Stephanopou-

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los and Panetta stems, in part, from their former immersion in the culture of House Democrats who stand heartily opposed to the bill.) Of the other key players on the issue, only Donna Shalala has been especially wary of the bill; in Cleveland visiting her mother the day of the vote, she kept calling in for floor updates. Meanwhile, strategist Dick Morris, political aide Rahm Emmanuel and Bruce Reed all think a good bill can be had. Dependable liberal Harold Ickes has barely weighed in, sources say.

For his part, Clinton has been characteristically squishy, not telling many aides where he is likely to go. His public statements have been just as equivocal. Last week, he denounced the current welfare legislation as a fraud. "You can put wings on a pig," he told a California crowd, "but you don't make it an eagle." In the same breath, Clinton praised the "bipartisan" direction in which the legislation was heading.

There are variables to watch in the coming days. Daschle not only voted against the Senate version of the bill, he angrily denounced it as "punitive." Does that mean other Democrats will follow suit? And will the left have time to mobilize against the bill? Some on the left have taken a make-it-work attitude thus far. They hate the current bills but feel something is doomed to pass and are salvaging what they can. Now there's noise of an all-out push to encourage the president to veto it. Marian Wright Edelman, who has fought the bill, may take her complaint with her longtime friends, the Clintons, more public, according to allies of the Children's Defense Fund head.

If the White House is serious about signing, it has to find a way to nudge the House-Senate conference in its direction. The strategy is to be evasive, never offering firm signals about what would trigger a veto. "Otherwise, they may put in veto bait," says a senior Clinton adviser. Still another option making the rounds at the White House: sign the bill, hope for re-election and fix it next year.

How did we get to this point? Welfare reform has shown Clinton at his best and worst. His greatest contribution to the welfare debate was to give it a vocabulary, a way to make the idea of reforming welfare palatable to blacks and liberals who saw every proposal as casting mothers onto the street. At an early presidential debate in '92, when Virginia Governor Doug Wilder was still running, he likened Clinton's stand on welfare to David Duke's. But the charge didn't stick. Clinton's patent empathy for the black experience made Wilder's charge seem odious.

Throughout the 1992 presidential campaign, welfare reform was a Clinton mantra. At some points he emphasized it less, rather than more, making the litmus-test fanatics at the Democratic Leadership Council go crazy. But for the most part it was a mainstay and a revolutionary one at that. Recall that in 1991 the wisdom held that the Democratic Party's affiliation with blacks, taxes, welfare and the like made it difficult for them to attain a national majority. Clinton proved them wrong. His more optimistic playbook was a 1991 article in *The American Prospect* by his pollster, Stanley Greenberg, which suggested that a Democrat who had credibility on crime and welfare could gain that majority.

But Clinton lost his bearings. He listened too intently to Greenberg's notion that universal entitlements could cement a Democratic majority. When he came to office, welfare reform was put on the back burner, behind health care, which affected far more people and ate more of the budget. But Clinton didn't count on losing the Democratic Congress. Now, five years after Bruce Reed came up with the two-year rule, he faces a much more difficult choice. •

Vancouver's AIDS promise.

CHASING THE CURE

By Jerome Groopman

The AIDS Conference held last week in Vancouver celebrated a turning point in the battle against the human immune deficiency virus (HIV). For the first time, a true clinical remission of the disease was reported. Talk of a cure for the great health scourge of our time filled the halls.

A year ago, AIDS researchers, myself included, expressed cautious optimism in the fight against AIDS (see "AIDS Hope," April 3, 1995). The hope was that a combination of drugs such as AZT and 3TC, which slow the rate at which the virus replicates, and the new protease inhibitors, which drastically reduce the amount of virus in the body, could improve the health of AIDS patients. It has. With this triple combination—AZT, 3TC and a protease inhibitor—virus production slowed ten- to 100-fold, and the capacity of the immune system to defend itself from viral attack grew. It now appears this treatment could add many years of productive life.

But do these inroads against AIDS amount to a cure? It's too early to say yes. There's not yet enough evidence to conclude that this combination completely inhibits HIV, or that its effects can be sustained indefinitely.

For one thing, the virus is remarkably resilient. It mutates and grows resistant to the treatments applied against it. The virus also reproduces in certain areas of the body, such as the brain, lymph nodes and testes (called "sanctuary sites"), where current antiviral drugs still don't penetrate well. For many of the treated patients, the drug therapy bolstered their immune systems markedly, yet still didn't return them to full strength. This less-than-complete recovery suggests that, for these patients, HIV may still be at work in their sanctuary sites, where it is actively killing T-cells, which

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guard against deadly infections.

But that doesn't mean a cure is unattainable. Based on the success and limitations of triple drug therapy, three strategic aims emerge. First, to develop enough novel and complementary therapies to paralyze the virus completely and prevent it from mutating anew or otherwise becoming resistant to further drug treatment. Next, to deliver these effective drug combinations to the hard-to-reach sanctuary sites. Finally, to restore each patient's immune defenses. All three objectives can probably be achieved.

The human immune deficiency virus is a parasite; it cannot exist or reproduce outside certain blood cells—the now-famous T-4 cells and macrophages of the immune system. But the damage it does—although limited to a tiny proportion of blood cells—is devastating. It not only blocks the normal defense functions of the immune system's T-cells, it remakes them into breeders of new virus and ultimately drains them of life. As T-cells and macrophages are destroyed, the body's defenses against infection and cancer are lost.

Key to continuing the fight to prevent AIDS is understanding the precise and discrete steps in the virus's disabling of the immune system cells. It allows us to create a variety of therapies to prevent or even disengage the virus's fatal embrace of the cell. Each step needs its own description.

Step One: Infection. Obviously, it's to our advantage to stop HIV before it infects new cells. To do this, we have to know how HIV spreads. And, in the last six months, we've come to understand that process better. When HIV encounters its prey, it grabs hold of the T-cell or macrophage by two distinct handles. The first, which has been known to researchers for a decade, is called CD4. The second is termed a serpentine chemokine receptor because it snakes through the surface of the cell. This second serpentine handle was identified only in the last half-year, and its discovery marks an important advance. It provides the key to creating new drugs designed to block HIV from attaching to uninfected cells—stopping its advance cold.

Step Two: Blueprinting. Next, after HIV penetrates the cell, the virus copies its genetic blueprint from an RNA form into DNA. A viral enzyme called reverse transcriptase is central to this process. The goal here is to reduce the ability of the virus to copy its blueprint. This limits the virus from imposing its genetic program on the cell's.

So far, the main treatments at this stage have been the drugs AZT and 3TC, which poison reverse transcriptase, the critical enzyme. And so far these drugs have been moderately successful in slowing the replication process. But now Boehringer Ingelheim has developed a different kind of drug called nevirapine, which will be widely available in the United States within weeks. Like AZT and 3TC, nevirapine also poisons the reverse transcriptase, though in a different fashion. Studies presented in Vancouver indicate that mixing these two types of poisons greatly enhances their potency against HIV, without harming the host. By inhibiting the pernicious enzyme at multiple sites, the combination makes it harder for the virus to grow resistant.

Step Three: Integration. If the DNA blueprint is successfully copied, the virus inserts itself into the nucleus of the cell. At this critical step, the virus takes hold of the cell's command center. Again, there's a key viral enzyme at work, one called integrase, which integrates the viral genes into those of the host.

Treatments at this stage of the infection have been slow to come. But computers are helping to map the three-dimensional structure of the integrase enzyme. Then, using the topology of the enzyme, the computers can design specific chemicals to inhibit the integrase. This approach succeeded in creating the protease inhibitors, and there's promise it will succeed here as well.

Step Four: Exportation. At the fourth stage of infection, a viral protein called Rev helps carry the instructions of the integrated blueprint from the nucleus out into the cytoplasm, or body, of the cell. There new viruses are constructed. Our laboratory and others have recently created "blockers" that in test-tube experiments prevent Rev from grabbing hold of and then transporting the blueprints. If the blueprints are locked in the center of the cell, they are useless in providing the needed design for production of HIV.

Step Five: New Viruses. The final steps in the life cycle of HIV involve assembling new viruses that exit the cell and then attack new prey. It is here that the powerful protease inhibitors work, disrupting the assembly. So far, these protease inhibitors—which are, after all, still relatively new—have their limits. They must be taken several times a day; they produce side effects of nausea, diarrhea and kidney stones; and, most important, they haven't deeply penetrated sanctuary sites. But the second generation of these drugs, some of which are already in clinical trials, show signs of working better.

Although HIV will try to elude these therapies, mutating and changing form to detour around the roadblocks placed in its path, there are limits to the contortions it can undergo. How many high hurdles are needed to stop the virus definitively? No one knows. We learned in Vancouver, however, that three drugs in combination cause the microbe to stumble severely. As we improve drug delivery to sanctuary sites, as we add both agents such as nevirapine and blockers of attachment, of integrase and of Rev, it is reasonable to imagine that virus production will be effectively shut down. Uncoupled from the virus's fatal embrace, the immune system may well be able to regenerate, like a bulb that returns in full blossom after a long winter. We still do not have a cure, but the question has become "when" rather than "if."

JEROME GROOPMAN is Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and director of the Mapplethorpe Laboratory for AIDS Research at Beth-Israel Deaconess Hospital.

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Liddy Dole's Red Cross runs amok.

BLOOD MONEY

By Katherine Eban Finkelstein

Minutes after Oklahoma City's federal building exploded on April 19, 1995, an American Red Cross spokesperson stood amid the rubble and warned, "This is causing a tremendous drain on our blood supply. We provide blood to the entire metro area and will need all blood types." More than 3,000 concerned Oklahomans turned out that day to give at Red Cross blood collection centers, some weeping as they rolled up their sleeves. Thousands more lined up at Red Cross outposts from New York to San Diego. One, Brenda Vance, an Arkansas bookkeeper who donates blood six times a year, spent her lunch hour on a plastic chair with a sixteen-gauge needle in her arm, leaving behind three units of pure O negative.

That night, Vance learned that the local Oklahoma Blood Institute, a Red Cross competitor, had met the victims' needs swiftly and in full. Meanwhile, the Red Cross, which collects 45 percent of the nation's blood, sold hers to a major Arkansas hospital, crying emergency all the while. "I feel that you used this emergency to build your own supplies, and I think this practice is despicable," she wrote to Red Cross President Elizabeth Hanford Dole. Vance has not given blood since.

America's oldest charity, which has drained flood-soaked towns and rescued tree-stranded cats since 1881, is using its do-good reputation to lure donors in an increasingly competitive $3 billion blood industry. While recent attention has focused on Elizabeth Dole's perceived conflict of interest if she continues running the $1.7 billion organization while First Lady, the Red Cross's new campaign for market share has created a far more serious problem. It has jeopardized the availability and safety of America's blood supply.

The Red Cross, though it operates as a single organization under one symbol—the most recognized in the world next to Coca-Cola—in fact performs two different and increasingly incompatible functions. It is a rescuer, aiding disaster victims through its far-flung "chapter" services. And it is a retailer, collecting, distributing and selling blood through its biomedical services. The Red Cross as rescuer is an organ of the government, first chartered by Congress in 1905. Its honorary chairman, the U.S. president, supplies it with a Washington, D.C., headquarters. The Red Cross as retailer has recently been transformed from a set of locally run blood charities into a brassy national business. In World War II, it provided blood to troops, then added blood banking to its established chapter services, using blood donated by volunteers to help neighbors.

In the 1960s, new commercial and non-profit blood bankers entered the business, creating dangerous competition. Throughout the industry, paid heroin addicts and winos replaced volunteer donors. One-fifth of transfusions resulted in hepatitis. Shortages led to rationing. In 1974, the federal government spelled out a national blood policy, ending payment to donors and assigning blood banks to individual communities, boosting the morale of local volunteers. But the Red Cross's problems had just begun. During the mid-'80s AIDS crisis, the Food and Drug Administration censured the Red Cross's biomedical services for releasing tainted blood. Struggling to comply with regulations, the biomedical services, which had once supported chapter services, began to lose more than $2 million a week. Worse, hospitals under pressure from managed care began whittling their budgets, including the 2 percent they spend on blood, and started lobbying for cheaper blood.

The Red Cross responded in 1991 by announcing a transformation. It proposed to place its disparate local blood shops under central control, to consolidate fifty-four laboratories into nine regional command centers, to develop one unified computer system and to pay for all this by hiking blood prices 6 percent. It separated chapter services from biomedical services, leaving the former under local control and turning the latter into a national franchise. Gone, suddenly, was the bake-sale social service model of blood banking and the trappings of a charity. In the new full-scale economic model, blood was a commodity.

The new system has created new problems. In the last eight years, blood donations to the Red Cross have declined by almost 10 percent. Community-based blood banks, which collect and sell 43 percent of the nation's blood, have cried foul. Numerous hospitals have complained to the Justice Department about unfair pricing schemes. One for-profit blood bank has filed an anti-trust lawsuit. Meanwhile, the Red Cross, when convenient, still poses as one organization, both in marketing itself to donors and in managing its bank account. Last year, the biomedical services quietly borrowed $12.8 million from charitable donations given to disaster relief.

These machinations have shattered local donor bases and disrupted the blood supply. The local Springfield, Missouri, Red Cross, for example, used to collect a fifth more blood than it could use. Ten percent of eligible donors gave, compared to 5 percent elsewhere in the country. The oversupply kept blood prices among the lowest in the country. But in 1994, national headquarters asked its local centers to hike prices. The Springfield staff was outraged. Why should local hospitals pay and donors give to prop up an ailing national organization? So in August 1995 the Springfield Red Cross staff defected to start the Community Blood Center for the Ozarks. Its slogan: "LOCAL BLOOD FOR LOCAL PEOPLE." The Red Cross flew in a new management team of outsiders

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and filed suit against the Community Blood Center for stealing donor lists (a charge the center denies). Local hospitals, which invested $3.2 million in the start-up of the Community Blood Center, have refused to buy blood from the Red Cross.

Combined, the Red Cross and the Community Blood Center now collect only two-thirds of what the Red Cross used to at its peak. To meet the needs of its customers, the community center now imports a third of its blood from Florida and Iowa. Conversely, the Red Cross must now sell three-quarters of its locally collected blood out of state, since local hospitals aren't buying. Springfield's self-reliance—which had kept donor morale high—is gone.

The Red Cross is fast moving away from its local orientation. A warehouse at the St. Louis Red Cross receives surplus blood from around the country, then ships it out to undersupplied areas. But local centers have circumvented the hub, leaving it with a $4 million debt. During last January's blizzard, the hub's supply was so depleted that it could meet only half its shipment to the East Orange Blood Center in Newark, leading to dangerous shortages in New Jersey.

Undeterred, the Red Cross continues to expand its reach. This February, the Board of Governors approved a plan to expand and distribute to areas until now served, according to the 1974 federal policy, exclusively by the Red Cross's competitor, the Council of Community Blood Centers. "Either through ignorance of the federal policy or because it no longer serves them, the Red Cross now collects blood anywhere and sells it anywhere," says Jim Macpherson, executive director of the Council of Community Blood Centers. "They have brought in their generals to fight the blood wars and have a mentality that is not in the best interest of public policy."

This competitive strategy has created new safety hazards. Though the FDA mandates nine rigorous tests for all collected blood—for HIV, hepatitis, syphilis and other diseases—there remains a window of risk, a period from one day to six weeks after a disease is contracted when its antibodies cannot be detected. Since blood has a short shelf life, it must be shipped out and transfused, usually before the six-week period is up. As a safeguard, potential donors must fill out a long questionnaire about high-risk behavior and can discreetly bow out of giving. "The ability and willingness of the donor to give reliable information is critical to the safety of the blood supply," asserts Dr. Jay Epstein, the FDA's director of the office of blood research and review.

To infiltrate new areas and lure new donors, however, the Red Cross has undertaken potentially unsafe practices, which the FDA has investigated. At the University of Oklahoma, the Red Cross distributed a flier offering to pay sororities and fraternities cash for corralling donors. It has also encouraged corporations to sponsor blood drives that offer perks to employees who donate, such as frequent-flyer miles, hotel privileges and restaurant coupons. Last year, the FDA cited two Red Cross regions for collecting blood from underage donors. The Red Cross told investigators high-school donors had lied about their age.

Last month, the FDA censured the Red Cross for providing donors with misleading promotional materials. One brochure, "The Red Cross Advantage," suggested that the Red Cross provided a safer and better product than its competitors. "Superiority claims," the FDA wrote, "must be supported by data." It also cited a Red Cross national testing laboratory brochure for incorrectly claiming that its Quality Assurance program was the FDA's "benchmark" for safety. In fact, the FDA deemed it "unacceptable" in 1994, and cited its national laboratory for repeatedly labeling indeterminate HIV tests as negative—clearing the release of potentially tainted blood. More benignly, but still deceitfully, national headquarters continues to blur the distinction between its relief work and blood banking, as internal memos advise regions to use the rescuer identity—high-gloss visuals of disaster relief workers—to attract blood donors.

Presumably, the new national system has given the Red Cross more centralized control over its blood testing and labeling. Yet, as blood travels greater distances, it is exposed to new hazards. The FDA cited six regions for failing to follow safety procedures for shipping blood, which include maintaining it at the correct temperature. The FDA also cited national headquarters for late reporting of errors and accidents, up from 2 percent in December, 1993, to 55 percent in February, 1994. And with the new centralized scheme, small mistakes could become colossal. "In Osh Kosh, Wisconsin [prior to transformation], you might have released 1,000 mismarked units," a former Red Cross lab technician explained. "Now, if you make a mistake in Dedham [one of nine new centers], you're going to release 100,000 units."

Competition is not the problem. Even the Red Cross concedes that market realities have awakened it from slumber. In St. Louis, blood prices soared and service deteriorated until Gateway, a for-profit blood bank, came to town. "Their presence," says Ellis Frohman, laboratory director for Barnes & Jewish Hospitals, "has enabled us to negotiate better with the Red Cross." John Forbes, a new principal officer for the St. Louis Red Cross, admits, "We have been an arrogant monopoly, and when you behave that way, you can expect companies to leave you if they have a choice."

But, if the Red Cross is to compete in the marketplace, it should declare itself the business that it is, rather than using its now-unrelated charity work to build its market share. To continue its blood banking and charity work under one umbrella misleads donors and encourages the pattern of deceit for which it has been cited. Bob and Elizabeth Dole may be unlimited partners, but her two Red Crosses should establish different boards, different presidents and separate funding—and move from separation to complete divorce.

KATHERINE EBAN FINKELSTEIN, *The New York Observer*'s health-policy reporter, has written for *The New York Times Magazine* and other publications.

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Welfare: Where Do We Go from Here?

The end of work

To its proponents, the welfare reform legislation before Congress will finally allow states the flexibility to shape their own anti-poverty policies. To opponents, it is dangerous because it repeals the national "entitlement" that poor children currently enjoy. Yet states have always had enormous control over Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Mississippi sets benefits at $120 per month for a family of three, Connecticut at more than $600. Children are entitled only to whatever states are willing to provide. And with the extraordinary willingness of the Clinton administration to grant waivers from existing federal statutes for state reform programs, the arguments that states can or cannot be trusted seem moot.

What is really at stake is far more fundamental: whether this legislation will, as real reform must, transform the current check-writing system into one based on work, or whether it will instead set in motion draconian budget cuts that leave poor families worse off than today.

There are draconian cuts in the bill as drafted—enough that, according to Office of Management and Budget estimates, more than a million more children will become poor if the legislation is enacted. There are sharp cuts in Food Stamps to working families, benefits to disabled children, support for needy legal immigrants who are not yet citizens.

Even more worrisome, the bill creates incentives for states to cut people off rather than get them into jobs. Prior to this legislation, any cut or increase in state spending for needy families was matched at least dollar for dollar with federal aid. For poorer states the federal match rate reached 4 to 1. Under the proposed congressional reform, federal money will be delivered in fixed block grants, largely unrelated to state spending, removing a powerful incentive to maintain state aid to struggling families.

Moreover, to continue receiving the full federal grants, states must move 50 percent of their caseload into jobs. I strongly support work requirements. But in the short run, work programs cost more than handouts. For states such as Mississippi and Arkansas, the proposed block grants would provide less than $15 per poor child per week for cash aid, workfare, training, childcare and other supports combined. I expect many poorer states will discover they simply cannot put people to work with so little money. So they will opt for a much cheaper way to reduce the rolls: set rigid time limits and then cut families off cold turkey. Under the proposed bill, recipients can be cut off even if there are no jobs available, and even if they would willingly take a workfare job. (Contrast this with the original Clinton bill, which required work of everyone after two years, but used the saved welfare money to help create temporary subsidized employment for people who couldn't find jobs.)

Faced with these incentives, some states will surely reduce benefits. Neighboring states, fearing welfare migration, will feel compelled to do so, too. The race for the bottom will begin. Meanwhile, support seems sure to wither at the federal level as well. Who will defend the probably unpopular "welfare block grant" in future years when the budget climate is even tighter?

I fear that "welfare reform," which held so much promise two years ago, has become an election-fueled tragedy in the making.

DAVID T. ELLWOOD

DAVID T. ELLWOOD is Malcolm Wiener Professor of Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

Hit and myth

Am I missing something? Throw people off welfare in the name of strengthening families and alleviating poverty? The logic of the likely congressional welfare bill goes something like this: ending a mother's welfare payments will force her to find a job. Bingo. We've got a working mom, and she's no longer poor. Why didn't we think of this a long time ago?

Because it's not so simple. I, like most others familiar with AFDC, believe that welfare hasn't worked as it was intended. It can act as a disincentive to work. It has for some become a way of life. There are children whose parents or grandparents have never held a job. But how is letting states throw people off welfare after two years going to help?

Myth #1: Stop welfare benefits and mom will find a job. Anyone who runs a welfare-to-work program will tell you it takes extraordinary effort to get someone who has for many years been without a job into the workforce. People don't work or can't hold onto work for reasons that have nothing to do with laziness. Some don't have the skills or self-discipline. Or they can't afford childcare. Or they are depressed, as would be most anyone assaulted by the crushing forces of drugs, violence and the physical collapse of entire neighborhoods. Jack Connelly, who runs Jobs for Youth, a Chicago-based job placement program for young inner-city men and women, figures his counselors must remain intimately involved with a client for two years before the client can be an independent and reliable worker. With Congress cutting overall funding, are the states going to pay to do this?

Myth #2: Dismantle welfare and we'll end the intergenerational poverty of the "underclass." There's a town of 12,000 in southwestern Michigan, Benton Harbor, where 45 percent of households receive public assistance. The wealthier people in the surrounding areas blame the town's decline on Michigan's generous welfare benefits. Single mothers with kids in tow, the story goes, journeyed to Benton Harbor from Indiana and Illinois so they could live like royalty. But Benton Harbor many years ago actively recruited Southern blacks to work its foundries and auto parts plants. Most of them have since closed, leaving these same people jobless. Nothing has replaced these industrial jobs—and there will still be nothing when after two years families are told to work or sink.

Myth #3: Limit benefits to two years and we'll strengthen families. This may be the most damaging assumption of all. Sure, some moms will find work and the self-esteem that accompanies it. But since many probably won't get or keep jobs, the loss of financial help for food, clothes and shelter (which is about all that welfare pays for) will lead to desperation, particularly among children. It's not as if other institutions can pick up the slack. Inner-city schools don't prepare kids for the workforce or college. The beat cop is too busy fighting the drug war to befriend the kids. And neighborhood-based programs have lost much of their public support. Jobs for Youth, for example, has had its annual federal funding slashed from $600,000 six years ago to $87,000 now.

Poor, urban communities, say both liberals and conservatives, are unraveling. Cutting financial assistance to families—without money for job creation, job training and daycare—will only accelerate that unraveling, not halt it.

ALEX KOTLOWITZ

ALEX KOTLOWITZ is author of *There Are No Children Here* (Doubleday).

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Samaritan's dilemma

The welfare debate has shifted rightward with such remarkable speed that changes that until recently would have seemed beyond the pale are now deemed necessary and desirable. Ending the federal government's responsibility to provide for indigent children is one such change. I cannot predict the effect of such a momentous alteration of child welfare policy; neither, it seems, can those more expert than me. But I am deeply wary.

Is it really no concern of the federal government if a state spends so little on its poorest children that they go hungry? Or, from a different perspective, should Washington forgo the chance to introduce on a national basis reforms in welfare policy that promise to reduce illegitimate births, or move adults into the workforce? Few devolution advocates insist Congress leave crime policy entirely to the states. Most appreciate that crime is a *national* concern, on which their constituents expect them to deliberate and act. Is not the welfare of impoverished children as important?

Without doubt, America's social fabric has unraveled to some degree over the past two generations. By allowing young women to bear children outside of marriage and still marginally support themselves, AFDC has, in effect, pulled on our social fabric's loose threads. But I am not as sanguine as some that ending the federal welfare entitlement will put Humpty Dumpty back together again. In the first place, the decline of marriage, the rise in sexual promiscuity and the growth of out-of-wedlock childbearing are worldwide trends, observable across social classes and only modestly related to the incentives created by transfer programs. Welfare policy, whether undertaken at the state or the federal level, is a crude tool for cultural reform. I predict disappointing results for those bent on defending "our values" from the ignoble influences of modernity by making it harder for indigent mothers to get the resources their children need to survive.

Second, whatever the encouragement given by AFDC to unwed childbearing, it is likely to persist under any system that offers hope to the families in which poor children live. Students of public finance are familiar with the "Samaritan's Dilemma": since the Samaritan hates to see others suffer, he cannot credibly discourage irresponsible behavior by threatening to force others to live with the consequences of their acts. And a wealthy, decent society like ours will not tolerate the suffering of innocents. Needy children born out of wedlock will, in the vast majority of cases, remain in the care of their mothers. When these mothers cannot provide food, clothing and shelter to their children, assistance will come from the Samaritans in their midst—and they know it. If federal aid is cut, local aid and private charity will rise to fill the gap. Changing the name of the Samaritan doesn't solve the dilemma.

By drastically cutting benefits to helpless people, radical reformers invite a new "sanctuary movement," one that will dwarf the effort of the same name mounted in reaction to Reagan's Central America policy in the 1980s. The irony is that these humane responses by citizens in reaction to the harsh policy of their government will defeat, or substantially offset, the intention of that policy: to make unwed childbearing so miserable an experience that no young woman would choose to endure it.

GLENN LOURY

GLENN LOURY is author of *One by One From the Inside Out* (The Free Press).

What we know

With the federal entitlement to welfare apparently about to expire, we're told that the states, unfettered by federal requirements, will become laboratories in which the mysteries of persistent poverty can be probed and a multiplicity of daring experiments tried out. Why stop with welfare? Let's take the test-tube approach to all our difficulties: Michigan could test whether abolishing Social Security boosts savings rates or cat food consumption by humans. California could see if public flogging deters teen sex. New York could fire its costly police force and try out neighborhood posses instead.

The truth is, we may not know how to "restore" the stable working-class two-parent family, a historically specific social form now in decline around the globe. But we know a great deal about what children need if they are to grow up well. They need to eat, for one thing; the House welfare bill cuts the Food Stamp budget by $27.5 billion over six years. They need well-staffed, quality daycare and preschools; the bill creates tremendous demand for childcare without providing anything like sufficient resources. We also know that New Jersey's three-year-old "family cap"—denying benefits to children born to a mother on welfare—has not reduced such births; nonetheless, the bill before Congress imposes a federal version of the family cap. We know that there are fourteen applicants for every fast-food job in Harlem; the bill does nothing to create employment and cuts welfare mothers off—for life—after a maximum of five years, whether or not they can find work. What happens then?

On what basis do we assume that the states, left to their own devices, will use their powers wisely and fairly? Even under the current system, some states set benefits scandalously low. In 1994, a family of three received $120 a week in Mississippi, $184 in Texas, $280 in Georgia. Block grant programs are, moreover, notoriously open to graft and abuse: in 1993, Mississippi's Human Services Department squandered its entire childcare and child-development block grant—$8.3 million—on Pentagon-style boondoggles and frivolities. Block grant fans portray the states as beacons of practical experience in social innovation—and a few may be. But it's certainly suggestive that twenty-two states are today partially or totally under court supervision for having mishandled foster care and other programs protecting children from abuse or neglect. It's also suggestive that the Senate voted down Paul Wellstone when he proposed requiring the Department of Health and Human Services to keep track of the effect of the welfare bill on child poverty. Apparently we are to conduct a grand experiment in the lives and health of children with no publishable results.

The notion that impoverishing the poor will bring about a reign of virtue and industry is a piece of pure ideology on a par with calling for "lavishly funded" orphanages. It bears no connection to how people actually live. You could say that Latin America has been one big laboratory for this idea—lots of religion, no social services. We know how that's turned out, and we know how welfare reform will turn out, too: wages will go down, families will fracture, millions of children will be more miserable than ever.

KATHA POLLITT

KATHA POLLITT is a columnist at *The Nation.*

Bury it

The last thing Bill Clinton wants as the 1996 presidential campaign enters the home stretch is a bunch of television ads featuring his 1992 pledge to "end welfare as we know it," followed by Republican commentators

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intoning that he blew "three chances" to do just that. So the president will probably endorse whatever the House and Senate plop on his desk.

But "welfare as we know it" will not end when Clinton signs. Ever since the Social Security Act of 1935, public assistance has been a patchwork of partial subsidies and mild oversight from Washington, channeled through widely varying state administrative arrangements and eligibility rules. If the current "reform" passes, the federal "guarantee" to contribute some aid to all eligible children will end.

That matters. But more consequential will be the dynamics set in motion in the states. Many states won't pay for much job training, and the new rules won't require them to do so. The new legislation will also encourage cost-conscious state governments to substitute federal funds, which they'll continue to receive, for monies of their own they must currently contribute to qualify for federal subsidies.

So the impending welfare changes should be called the "Shirk Responsibility for the Poor Act of 1996." Congress will proclaim that the federal government has ended the "failed welfare programs" of the past, while the states will save money on the poor. The federal-state patchwork will remain, but with less money. Anyone who supposes the new legislation will produce large numbers of new intact working families is welcome to check the data in a few years.

Many Democratic Party progressives swear to battle these welfare transformations to the end. But I find myself unwilling to woman the barricades. Whether or not Clinton signs this summer, the Democrats have signaled their willingness to dismantle federal welfare guarantees. The death knell for Aid to Families with Dependent Children is tolling. It is time to bury the corpse and move on.

AFDC started—not in 1935, as many people think, but in the 1910s—when forty states passed mothers' pensions, allowing local governments to make payments to impoverished widows so they could care for children in their own homes (rather than surrendering them to orphanages or foster care). When mothers' pensions became federally subsidized with Aid to Dependent Children in 1935, Americans still presumed a mother's place was in the home. But in the late twentieth century, they no longer do. Across the class structure, fathers and mothers alike hold paid employment. People will no longer accept a welfare system that ostensibly pays poor mothers to stay home. But the states are unlikely to turn AFDC into an effective work program.

Progressives should give up defending an outmoded and terribly inadequate welfare system centered on AFDC. They should call instead for work and family policies applicable to everyone, yet structured to give extra help to the least privileged working parents. Conservatives say they want work and responsible parenthood? Let's take them up on it—and try to create social policies that make it possible for all Americans, poor or not, to work while caring for children. Only when progressives adopt such an approach will welfare reform as we know it come, blessedly, to an end.

THEDA SKOCPOL

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In an ideal world

As long as government responds to all unmarried women and fatherless children with one program—AFDC—welfare cannot be fundamentally reformed. Poor divorced mothers need help to survive the end of a marriage, but they usually stay on AFDC a short time, and such help can be supplied by states with only modest federal assistance or direction.

Unmarried teenage moms, by contrast, are the heart of the underclass problem, bearing children who never have a father and who sometimes spend a lifetime on welfare. Since the crisis of the underclass affects the entire nation, substantial federal assistance, if only modest federal direction, is needed.

In an ideal world, AFDC would not exist. There would be instead three different programs run by different state agencies and receiving differing amounts of federal support. It might look something like this:

The *Program in Child Development* would offer cash, Food Stamps and medical care to unmarried mothers under 18. Administered by each state's department of child services, not a welfare agency, it would require, as a condition of aid, that the teenager live with her child in a group home or family shelter. The shelter, administered by a church or private organization, would supply parental instruction, supervise childcare, ban alcohol or drug use, and insist that each mother complete high school. Men who father the children of underage mothers would, when identified, be offered a choice between marrying the mother or facing prosecution for statutory rape. The Program in Child Development would concentrate federal dollars on those mothers and children likely to spend lifetimes on welfare, and it would supply serious parental instruction free of a mandatory work requirement.

The *Program in Parent Training* would serve women age 18 and older who apply to it because they have had a child and lack a husband. Like the Program in Child Development, it would be run by a state's department of child services. It would supply not only cash, Food Stamps and medical care but also a housing allowance. As a condition of receiving this aid, each mother would be required to receive regular home visits and parent-training sessions and to take available jobs provided adequate daycare was available for the child. Women would be eligible for three years of such aid, but no more.

The *Program in Maternal Assistance* would aid mothers who, though once married, have lost their husbands to death, desertion or divorce. It would be run by a state's employment service and consist of financial aid accompanied by a job training and job placement program. Its beneficiaries would be women hurt by temporary adversity, who now stay on AFDC for only a short time. Their plight would be clearly and bureaucratically separate from teenage illegitimacy.

Each of the three programs would have its own separate financing. Other than setting general rules, no program would receive any detailed federal guidance. The first would enjoy substantial federal financing but exclusively private management; the third would have the least federal financing and a mixture of public and private management. Periodically each state's programs would be subject to external review by something like the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

If we had today's social problems but Aid to Families with Dependent Children had never existed, we would probably create something like this. Today, with AFDC, we are fighting over how to "fix" a program with diverse and incompatible ends. I doubt we can.

JAMES Q. WILSON

JAMES Q. WILSON is author of *The Moral Sense* (The Free Press).

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Photos of gulags, or John Travolta's yard.

THE SATELLITE REVOLUTION

By Charles Lane

A revolution in human perception is coming. It involves high-resolution photographs, taken from hundreds of miles up in space by ultra-sensitive imaging satellites. The pictures are nothing short of mind-blowing—so detailed that by studying them carefully it is possible to tell the shape of a Chevy Blazer from that of a T-72 tank, or to distinguish a crowd of anti-government demonstrators from a cluster of bushes. Once the exclusive province of the American intelligence community, these images will soon be available to anyone in the world who can afford to pay for them.

The origins of the revolution lie in President Clinton's 1994 decision authorizing American aerospace firms to market satellite photographs with a resolution of up to one meter. The first American satellite launched for this purpose will be rocketed into orbit in December 1997 by Space Imaging, a spin-off of Lockheed-Martin; other U.S. firms will follow soon after. The most advanced new technology, capable of telling a small cluster bomb from a soccer ball, is still classified, available only to the intelligence agencies. But by declassifying one-meter resolution photos Clinton has made possible the private use of images better than those that were available to U.S. intelligence in the early years of the cold war—and ten times more precise than the best images commercially available now.

The satellite photos will change the way we think about everything from insurance to agriculture. Flood and earthquake damage will be measurable with unprecedented precision. Farmers will be able to see in an instant which acres of their land are most productive and allocate fertilizer and pesticide accordingly. Environmentalists could follow the burning of the Amazon rain forest tree by tree, or the migration pattern of a herd of endangered elephants. A realtor in California can offer prospective home buyers a detailed look at neighborhoods in New York. The images will be shot to order, digitized, computer-enhanced to three dimensions and delivered via the Internet.

If high-resolution imagery's impact on business will be profound, its impact on international politics could be transformative. Even the limited release of U.S. aerial reconnaissance photos has played a critical role in the cold war and post-cold war worlds. Try to picture the Cuban missile crisis without the sensational release of U-2 spy plane pictures of the island. The Reagan administration documented its claims of a Soviet threat in Nicaragua and Grenada with pictures of airstrips and military training camps. Last year, American spy photos of mass graves near Srebrenica blew the cover off the Serbian massacre of that Bosnian town's men.

In these instances, however, it was up to the government to decide if disclosure suited its political interests. Now every man's a spy. Already, ABC News is planning how to incorporate the technology into its coverage. And Dino Brugioni, a retired American intelligence official who during the Eisenhower years used U-2 photos to document China's destruction of Tibet's Buddhist culture, says he has been retained by an unnamed organization to interpret the new satellite photos for human-rights-related purposes.

To be sure, reading these images won't be as simple as leafing through a wedding album. The interpretation of reconnaissance photographs takes creativity, experience and some training in the use of special magnification equipment. The cost will be about $1,000 per image until economies of scale and technological advances drive the price down. But, by the first decade of the next century, it will have become vastly more difficult for dictators and violent movements to conceal their crimes.

To take one obvious example, we would have learned much more, much earlier about Bosnian concentration camps if private groups or the news media had been able to scan that country's territory from space during the war's early days. Rumors of Hafez al-Assad's destruction of the rebellious Syrian town of Hama in 1982 would have been verified in vivid detail, as would Saddam Hussein's destruction of the Marsh Arabs of the Tigris-Euphrates River delta.

No human rights monitor has ever been allowed into North Korean territory; now the rumored North Korean gulag can be documented from space. Ditto for China's prison camps, or Cuba's. When a crisis breaks out, a satellite can be brought on station within

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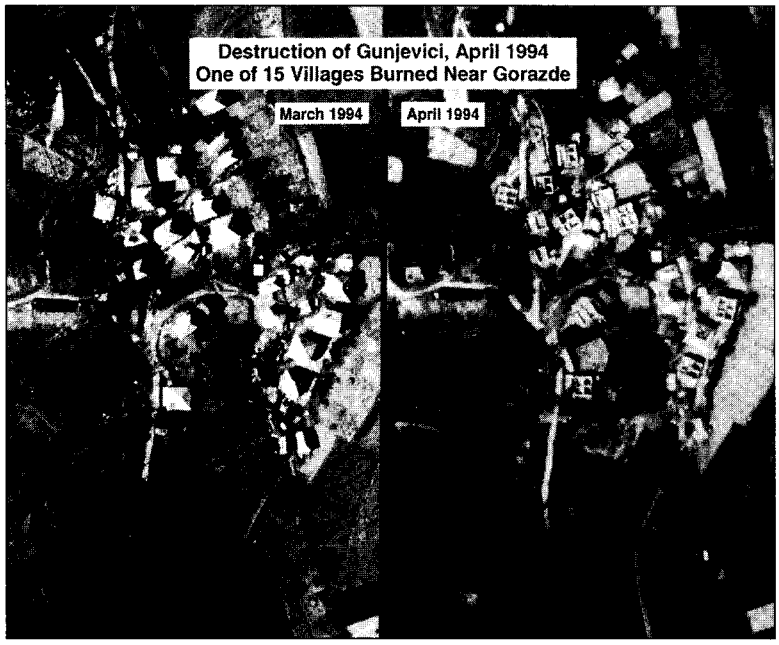
hours to photograph the action, possibly deterring atrocities. Holly Burkhalter of Human Rights Watch cites the case of a Catholic church compound in Rwanda where some 7,000 Tutsis took refuge during the 1994 genocide. Surrounded by Hutu militants, the church was systematically attacked and its inhabitants butchered over several days. "If we could have shown pictures of that slaughter in progress," Burkhalter says, "it could have forced someone to try to stop it."

Unleashing a revolution in human peace and freedom does not seem to have been on Bill Clinton's mind when he threw open the secret world of satellite imagery. Rather, it was a matter of dollars and cents. Clinton came into office trumpeting a national security policy that placed economic strength on a par with military strength. The late Ron Brown's Department of Commerce, always on the lookout for ways to boost the fortunes of American high-tech firms, took up the aerospace industry's case. With no Soviet threat, Commerce and the companies argued, there was no reason to maintain absolute secrecy in this technology. Instead, the threat to American interests came from Russian and French satellite companies that were about to enter the market themselves. The potential market was huge. Sales of low-resolution imagery already hit $700 million in 1994, according to an Office of Technology Assessment study, and the growth rate may reach 15 to 20 percent per year once high-resolution systems come on line. If Clinton didn't act, Commerce said, the United States would be left behind as foreigners gobbled up the profits from yet another made-in-America cutting-edge technology.



Courtesy CIA

BOSNIA, AS VIEWED BY THE CIA

The Pentagon and the CIA continued to protest on security grounds. And their arguments aren't trivial. Satellite imagery is, unarguably, "dual-use" technology, applicable to both military and non-military purposes. When the aerospace contractors first considered pushing for the right to market high-resolution images, says Jim Graham of Lockheed-Martin, "the big issue within the industry was 'Could it be used for military purposes?' and the answer is, it could." Clinton's executive order included a provision for "prior restraint" when crises arise: as a condition of their licenses, U.S. satellite companies must agree to shut down their cameras if the government says their operation would imperil national security. And no U.S. firm would jeopardize its license by knowingly selling vital information to a hostile foreign entity, during a crisis or otherwise.

All the same, there's no way to guarantee some cut-out firm or double agent won't buy such images and re-sell them to a U.S. enemy. In theory, Islamic Jihad could get its hands on a one-meter resolution picture of, say, a U.S. Air Force general's headquarters in Turkey, convert the shot to a precise three-dimensional image, combine it with data from a Global Positioning System device you can buy at Radio Shack and transmit it to Baghdad, where a primitive cruise missile purchased secretly from China could await its targeting coordinates. "This very comfortable world people have been living in where fixed installations on land are safe is gone with the wind," says James Woolsey, Clinton's former director of central intelligence (who is now supporting the Dole campaign).

Critics of the satellite-imaging industry claim it is foreign governments, not city planners or real estate firms, who are most likely to become the industry's high-paying repeat customers. Satellite-imaging companies concede that, besides relatively benign potential clients such as the news networks and oil pipeline planners, they have already been approached by security establishments from abroad. "We've had interest from countries around the world who are interested in monitoring their borders," says Laura Ayres of OrbImage—though she refuses to name these countries.

It's not clear, though, whether the consequences will be stabilizing or destabilizing. During the early decades of the cold war, writes Dino Brugioni in the March 1996 *Scientific American*, "images prevented dangerous surprises and showed arsenals to be less imposing, and intentions less sinister, than had been thought." If, say, Ecuador knows from satellite images that Peru hasn't been stockpiling tank fuel for the last few months, this data could reassure the Ecuadorans that Peru isn't about to renew their age-old border war. Of course, the opposite could also occur: if Ecuador finds out that Peru is much weaker and more vulnerable, or much stronger and more menacing,

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than previously thought, it could induce a pre-emptive strike.

Such inherent unknowns have led to the biggest behind-the-scenes battle yet over the commercialization of satellite technology: Israel's bid to block satellite photography of its tiny territory. Israel has complained to the Clinton administration about the recent declassification of hundreds of thousands of medium-resolution Corona satellite pictures from the '60s, a few of which show the early stages of Israel's nuclear bomb-making complex at Dimona. The protest came amid a broader campaign by the Israeli government and its Washington supporters, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), to stop U.S. firms from taking *any* pictures of Israel. Understandably, Israel fears these photos could fall into terrorist hands, or enable an enemy like Iraq or Syria to target positions in Israel with fine accuracy and total surprise.

The issue was joined in June 1995 when OrbImage, a small Dulles, Virginia, firm, announced it had received Commerce Department approval for a Middle East imaging venture with EIRAD, a firm owned by Saudi Prince Fahd Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz. According to knowledgeable Arab sources, the main intended customer was to have been the Saudi Defense Ministry. AIPAC, sensing a threat to Israeli security—and another Washington donnybrook like the one over Reagan's 1981 sale of AWACS planes to Riyadh—sprang into action. More than sixty senators signed a letter to Ron Brown expressing concern about the deal. The Saudi government, which already has access to secret state-of-the-art Pentagon satellite intelligence, didn't want to risk a loud quarrel with AIPAC for the sake of inferior photos. So it advised OrbImage and the prince to back off. OrbImage agreed not to take any pictures of Israeli territory.

That was not the end of the matter, however. A proposed AIPAC-backed amendment to the Senate Defense Authorization bill would have formally banned all American firms from collecting or disseminating satellite photographs of Israel beyond the level of resolution that is currently "routinely commercially available." The catch is that Israel's own Ofeq-3 satellite, developed with U.S. military aid, can also produce one-meter imagery. Israel Aircraft Industries, a state-owned firm, has been dabbling in the market for high-resolution photography. American firms suspected that Israel was merely out to create regulatory hassles for U.S. firms—and thus secure a competitive advantage for itself.

Then, in mid-June, the Israeli Defense Ministry denied Israel Aircraft Industries permission to sell photos of more than 2.8 meters resolution. This deflected the U.S. industry's criticism of Israel's motives, because it ostensibly surrendered the Israeli company's right to market one-meter photographs. It also set 2.8 meters as Israel's definition of what the U.S. should consider "routinely commercially available" for purposes of the Senate legislation.

During Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent visit to Washington, the subject was taken up in a meeting between the director of Mossad, Dani Yatom, and John Deutch, the U.S. director of central intelligence. According to an American source familiar with the talks, Deutch agreed that Israel faces a threat, but the two sides are still haggling over what level of resolution exactly is "routinely commercially available." Of course, Israel wants to secure its special exception without setting a highly visible precedent for similar claims from other U.S. allies—which could get Israel blamed for aborting the U.S. industry. "That's why we're being so circumspect," says a source on the Israeli side of the issue.

Whether or not Israel manages to broker itself a prior restraint deal, the situation raises another irony. Exposed as they are, countries have more power to protect their national privacy than individual citizens have to protect their personal privacy. Under international law, every country will be entitled to request copies of the satellite images made of its territory—which in theory gives them some leverage to prevent unwanted snooping. U.S. domestic law, by contrast, is underdeveloped. What will happen when the Internal Revenue Service, or a local property-tax collection agency, starts using satellite photos to search randomly for undeclared cars and boats? Will American courts revise their reluctance to impose prior restraint on the media? It's one thing to poke around in Saddam Hussein's marshes. But what's the public interest in helping "Hard Copy" peer into John Travolta's backyard from outer space?

For all the lingering problems and the unresolved paradoxes, Clinton did the right thing by declassifying this technology. Indeed, he really didn't have a choice. Other countries would have gotten into the business anyway. America's economic and national security interests lie in having the maximum number of satellite photo customers dependent on U.S. companies before foreigners catch up with U.S. technology. At least this way most of the market will be subject to U.S. law and regulations. For the same reason, U.S. dominance serves the interests of Israel and other nervous U.S. allies, too.

As even Israel's U.S. supporters on the issue privately concede, Israel can at most delay the inevitable, given global competition and the steady onrush of technology. High-resolution satellite photography, like the video camera and the microchip, seems destined to outstrip any effort to blunt its social and political impact, or to channel it into governmentally approved directions. The technology is, by its nature, "dual-use"—not just in the strict sense of having both civil and military functions, but in a broader moral sense. It can be extraordinarily constructive or extraordinarily destructive. The best approach, and the only realistic one, is to try to reap the fantastic benefits while minimizing, and then accepting, the risks. •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

Bad publicity

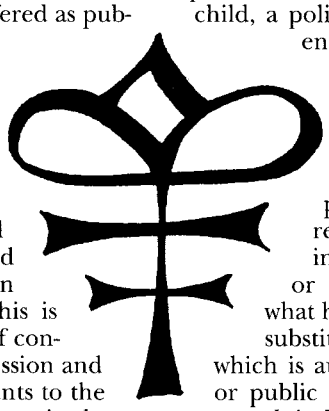
A quarter of a century ago a rare and brilliant gentleman, my mentor George Armstrong Kelly, regaled me with a late-night tale of a play he was writing to divert himself from his heavy and consuming scholarship (research into the cultural sources of the French Revolutionary bloodletting). The drama opened with a male and female character in the nude, seated in a den or comfortable living room. The man was lounging on a sofa, reading a newspaper, and yawning from time to time. The woman was curled up, polishing her nails, also plainly bored. Then one of the two arose and casually put on a piece of clothing. The other followed, languidly. The dressing began slowly, then quickened. Only by the play's end, with each protagonist fully dressed, up to and including their accessories, did the pair express any interest in one another; only then did the dialogue begin. If memory serves, the script ended with the couple in an ardent embrace, having become interested, even amorous, after the dressing was complete.

The point? The point, I suspect, was that only mystery, an embrace of certain forms and norms of circumspection, makes interest and passion possible. Only then do we have something to talk about. Stripped naked, we are reduced to the tedium of a nudist convention. Mystery lies at the heart of human variety.

In ways I didn't then understand, and found quirky and quarrelsome at best, George Kelly stood apart from the tell-all, reveal-all, expose-all ethos taking shape even then. He was countercultural to the conformist counterculture. He represented reticence and reserve. These qualities, in short supply in 1970, are even less evident and honored now.

Those who lament the loss of these qualities often do so in language that is cribbed and crabby, excessively moralistic: things are going to hell in a handcart, and so on. But Kelly's point was different. He began with the assumption that we were likely on the road to perdition. This was a given of the human condition after the Fall. He then asked: But what sort of life do we live in the meantime? If it is to be a life of texture and depth, it requires a culture that can sustain the distance between people. The culture must preserve certain distinctions, rather than throwing us up against one another nose to nose, without discrimination.

The political fallout of this mania for exposure is evident all around us. We want every detail of our political leaders' lives fully revealed. We have a love-hate relationship with the news media for their indefatigable digging up of all the dirt that's fit to print. This phenomenon, which has been going on for decades, stems partly from a cyclical process involving the public and the private: the public collapses into the private; the private is denigrated; and then, to complete the cycle, a besmirched notion of private life is offered as public fare.



Consider the current tendency to regard the answer to the question, "Have you or have you not cheated on your spouse?" as just as significant as a political candidate's track record on, say, U.S. intervention abroad or civil rights. This is more than just a matter of conflating a personal transgression and a public position. It amounts to the harsh conclusion that an episode of weakness exhausts the entire truth of the individual's private life. We judge people by their moments of weakness, their lapses and limits. We forget the exchange in *Unforgiven* between Clint Eastwood's protagonist and a kid who has for the first time killed a man. "Well, I guess he had it coming," the kid says, seeking to justify his deed. "We've all got it comin', kid," Eastwood replies—a classic restatement of a basic truth: that we are all sinners, all finite, frail, torn in basic ways. To be sure, the big sinners, those who flagrantly violate certain norms of decent behavior, raise legitimate suspicions about their characters and their capacity for public judgment. But entertaining doubts about them is different from the scandal-sniffing pettiness of the present moment.

In *Democracy on Trial*, I call this reductionistic process a "politics of displacement." It is a political attitude that presumes an identity, rather than a relationship, between the personal and the political. Nothing is exempt from political definition, direction and manipulation—not sexual intimacy, not love, not passion, not raising children, not friendship. Those who think there ought to be places to hide are deemed to *have* something to hide and thus are not to be trusted.

This is disastrous for democratic politics. A *political* perspective requires us to differentiate the activity we call "politics"—that which is held in common and open to public scrutiny and judgment—from other activities and relationships. If all conceptual boundaries are blurred and all distinctions between public and private eliminated, no politics can exist, by definition.

The emergence of a politics of displacement carries deep implications for how we will think about and conduct politics in the years ahead. We will do more of what we are doing already: taking to the airwaves and the streets, in our boredom and our anger, to proclaim the awful and ugly truth about a spouse, a friend, a lover, a parent, a child, a political figure or a despised enemy or group. A young woman, for the delectation of millions, spews venom at her sister for coveting her boyfriend. Reporters scour people's trash and video-rental records. Political activists insist that everyone's racial or sexual identity exhausts what he or she can say. This ugly substitution of *publicity* for that which is authentically either private or public is now America's leading growth industry.

The complete collapse of the distinction between public and private identities, commitments and activities is anathema to democratic thinking, which considers these differences of vital importance. This democratic tenet does not create a wall of separation between what is public and what is private. Rather, it insists that a distinction must be preserved, for the sake of both public life and private life. Historically, it has been the antidemocrats who have insisted that political life must be cut from one piece of cloth. They have demanded overweening and unified politicization, unclouded by various passions and interests. The antidemocrats disdain variety and refuse to honor Isaiah Berlin's recognition that not all worthy values harmonize in a tidy way. It is the absolutists, not democrats, who promote a single harsh standard of judgment and who undermine our capacity to be both friends and citizens, parents and activists, private and public persons.

The irony of the current moment is that we are rather like Kelly's bored nudes. Until we recapture a sense of forms, norms, place and simple propriety, we are doomed to boredom—alone in our nakedness, with little to say to one another.

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Women Regarding Women

In this swollen summer season, when *Independence Day* has sucked in another million dollars since you began reading this article, it's pleasant to come across two engaging small-scale films. Both are low-budget first features by women about women; both show talent.

The first zing of interest in **Manny & Lo** (Sony Pictures Classics) came from something that doesn't often register, the names of the producers. Dean Silvers and Marlen Hecht were involved in the production of David Russell's two films, *Spanking the Monkey* and *Flirting with Disaster*, so clearly they have an eye for new talent. That eye has worked again. This new writer-director, Lisa Krueger, took on a delicate, therefore difficult job, but it's the kind of project that would occur only to someone with a good chance of accomplishing it, which she has done.

Manny and Lo are sisters, 11 and 16. Both of them have fled from (different) foster homes in order to be together and to be free. They have stolen a car, which Lo drives. They live on the road, stealing food and gas. Manny is quiet, perceptive, shrewd, yet without that precocious knowingness about sex that is so often dumped on film children these days. Lo is bossy, profane, insecure and pregnant.

After they have followed their vagabond lives for a while, breaking into empty houses for shelter and boosting food in supermarkets, plus a bit of sex for Lo, Manny insists that they must face a fact they've been avoiding, Lo's approaching baby. They break into the well-furnished country home of some city type and camp there. They then kidnap Elaine, a woman in her 40s who works in a maternity shop in a nearby town. Elaine has indeed been a nurse. The sisters shackle her ankles so that she can't run away, and they depend on her for advice.

Elaine is a steep contrast to the girls. Her kidnapping will be noticed, she says proudly, because she is the coffee chairman of her church group; and her code of behavior does right by coffee chairmen everywhere—punctilious, ethically aphoristic, unafraid. Her propriety as she hobbles around the house in her shackles is exemplary, funny and, of course, symbolic.

Developments, as they tend to do, develop further. After some to-ing and fro-ing, including their flight from the house because the owner has discovered them, Lo finally has her baby by the side of a stream, with Elaine assisting. (The tidily achieved birth is the script's one suppositious touch.)

The film opens and closes with shots of a stream running simple and free. That's how the sisters would like to live. Those who remember the lovely film made from Marilynne Robinson's novel *Housekeeping* will recall that it ends with two young sisters hitting the road with their aunt. In an abstract sense, *Manny & Lo* is the sequel. Freedom, in our world, is not free: it must be bought with considerable danger and, quite possibly, a bit of crime. *Manny & Lo*, for all its verism, is a romance that quietly acknowledges the impossibilities of romance.

John Lurie's jazz score helps—spiky, prodding. Mary Kay Place, veteran of *The Big Chill* and many other films and TV shows, has a witty power of concentration on the disproportionate, staunchly defending petty-bourgeois etiquette in the midst of chaos. Aleksa Palladino gives Lo a bravado to which she clings like a scared swimmer to a log. But the key performance comes from Manny—Scarlett Johansson, who has been acting since the age of 8 off-Broadway and in TV and films. She has a lovely core of serenity and concern. It's easy to teach bright children to mimic, but Krueger has evoked a faculty of truth in Johansson. I hope we'll see more of her translucent face.

Krueger herself has had film education in California and France, has worked with European directors and has been a fellow at Sundance, where she had advice on the making of this film from several professionals. Her advisers have wisely not interfered with the reticent daring of *Manny & Lo*, its seeming casualness and spontaneity. The film itself is to the film world what the two sisters are to society.

Walking and Talking (Miramax), written and directed by Nicole Holofcener, is, yes, another Generation X film, but it's at least partially redeemed by the hyperrealistic acting of the two leading women. (It also has a helpful small resemblance, in tone and humor, to the English film *Antonia and Jane.*)

We glimpse Laura and Amelia first as

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Cold Comfort Farm. *English humor, 1932 style. Stella Gibbons's novel, about an airy London miss set down amidst rustic types, makes a nice crinkum-crankum treat. (Reviewed 5/27/96)* **Courage Under Fire.** *Two related military investigations after the Gulf war, with many flashbacks to combat. Less than meets the eye, but what does meet it is skillfully done. (7/29/96)* **Human Rights Watch Film Festival.** *Look for it in your area. A series of forty-one films from fifteen different countries. Most certainly worth sampling. (7/1/96)* **Who Killed Pasolini?** *The murder of this gay artist-activist by a gay hooker may have had political implications. A fine Italian docudrama explores. (7/1/96)*—**SK**

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early teenage friends, commenting on the grossness of the pictures in a sex manual. Then, when they're around 30 in New York, we see them contending with the grossness and non-grossness of sex itself. They are still extremely close. Laura is a therapist about to marry. Amelia is in an office job, is seeing a therapist and is not about to marry.

Most of the film is concerned with the sexual adventures and misadventures of the pair, even the betrothed one. Amelia gets tangled briefly with a video-store clerk, who is really a writer. ("Really" something else is typical: Laura meets a waiter who is really an actor.) The clerk episode explodes because of an answering machine bungle by Laura. Laura's engagement hits a rock because of a mole on her fiancé's chest. (I won't explain.) The overall atmosphere of the picture is that of waiting—waiting, not searching—for some point and purpose in life, even for the marrying couple.

Holofcener, who studied film at Columbia and has directed shorts, gets some sprightliness into her writing but not much difference in characterization between the two women. Seemingly, either woman could step into the other's life without much trouble, and this aspect is not sufficiently dramatized to make it the point of the film. Yet the opening and close of the picture underscore that, whatever else may happen with them, their sisterly love, their near-symbiosis, is their refuge.

Some of the dialogue seems improvised; still, what makes even the most banal lines shine a bit is the acting of the two women, Anne Heche (Laura) and Catherine Keener (Amelia). Every utterance, every response gets a décor of facial play—lightning-swift flickers of repressed statements, half-thoughts, regrets, secrets. Their faces become the screens of mental x-ray machines. It's an almost microscopic style of acting that was developed in TV, probably because the writing there is usually so bad that the actors or directors brought forth this style to give the dialogue some non-verbal texture. It's as if the actor were trying to express facially the stage directions that precede or follow the line in order to enrich it.

This fine-spun style could easily become mere mugging and even if not, could become a bit wearing. But Holofcener and Heche and Keener have used it amusingly here, sometimes even touchingly. It's the chief interest in the film. •

Alive Beyond Question

BY PETER GREEN

Louis MacNeice: A Biography by Jon Stallworthy

(W.W. Norton, 572 pp., $35)

I discovered Louis MacNeice in the dark winter of 1941. I was a 17-year-old schoolboy at Charterhouse and life looked decidedly bleak. The normal spartan propensities of English public schools—cold baths, hard exercise, a kind of secular monasticism—had been given a tremendous boost by wartime conditions. Rationing was tight, propaganda insidious and the puritanism of self-denial all-pervasive: this provided a nice breeding-ground for religious conversions, mostly of the Buchmanite or Oxford Group persuasion. At the end of the tunnel there loomed not light, but the prospect of military service. Though tucked away in the heart of the Surrey countryside, Charterhouse had recently seen action, when a retreating German bomber unloaded a stick of small oil-bombs into the main quadrangle. This did little damage, but it made a lot of noise and somehow managed to knock out our electrical power. It also happened during house-prayers, which were being conducted by the house-tutor, a vulturine anachronism with a booming, arrogant voice, a passion for cricket and unlimited self-confidence. "Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord," he snarled in the sudden blackout. The lights promptly came on again. As a friend of mine said afterwards, the idea of our house-tutor bossing God around almost made conscription seem attractive.

When not on fire-watching duty, or playing compulsory games, or messing about in a Home Guard commando unit (the prospect of blowing up local bridges, not to mention shooting rabbits with Sten guns, had a certain appeal), I was specializing in Greek and Latin classics, with the intention of trying for a competitive scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge in a year's time. I was also having considerable doubts about the relevance of what I was doing to the age in which I lived: doubts that my coevals in modern languages and mathematics, already getting notices of interest from military intelligence, zealously reinforced. The writers I most admired—Eliot, Woolf, Proust, Auden—didn't help. Eliot, despite his haunting mnemonic phrases, seemed to be presiding over the Decline of the West. Woolf and Proust were frivolously preoccupied (I felt) with private emotions rather than public ones. (This was stupid of me; it was no accident that these two were prime favorites with men on active service.) Auden's belligerent Marxist stance, suspect anyway, had been dented by his wartime retreat to America and Anglicanism.

Thus MacNeice—as anyone familiar with his work will already have realized—came into my life at the right psychological moment. Like Auden, who borrowed the habit from Augustine, I have a list of those responsible for bestowing on me such well-timed and infinitely influential epiphanies. So it happened that on a gray February afternoon Anthony Caro—then a chubby, beaming, impulsive adolescent, with no hint of the future sculptor about him—burst into my study clutching a slim volume. "I have to read you this poem," he announced. "It's called 'Eclogue for Christmas'; it's like nothing I've ever read before." I very nearly sent him packing on the spot: I had a lot of work to do, and his instant enthusiasms were notorious.

"Who's it by?" I asked. "Louis MacNeice," he said. Well, ah. I'd heard of MacNeice, as a component of that mythical '30s beast the MacSpaunday (along with Spender, Auden and Day Lewis), but I hadn't seen any of his work. I vaguely knew he was Anglo-Irish, that he was supposed to run in Auden's shadow. And it was a very gloomy afternoon. "All right, Tony. Read. I'm listening." And from the first lines onward, I was indeed listening:

> The jaded calendar revolves,
> Its nuts need oil, carbon chokes
> the valves,
> The excess sugar of a diabetic
> culture
> Rotting the nerve of life and
> literature . . .

The voice was sardonic, shrewd, observant, its apocalyptic ideology ("We shall

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go down like palaeolithic man / Before some new Ice Age or Genghiz Khan") offset by a marvelous sensuous awareness of the tangible:

> But yet there is beauty narcotic
> and deciduous
> In this vast organism grown out of us:
> On all the traffic-islands stand
> white globes like moons,
> The city's haze is clouded amber
> that purrs and croons,
> And tilting by the noble curve bus
> after tall bus comes
> With an osculation of yellow
> light, with a glory like
> chrysanthemums.

More intriguing still were signs of a vision grounded in common sense, a voice set to deflate Auden's gaseous fantasies of wholesale carnage:

> What will happen when
> the sniggering
> machine-guns in the
> hands of the young
> men
> Are trained on every flat
> and club and beauty
> parlour and Father's
> den?

Well, what *would* happen? MacNeice had an unexpected answer, but one that revealed a sense of historical realities rare among his contemporaries (already in 1940, as I later found out, he had presciently predicted that Churchill would win the war but Labour the peace):

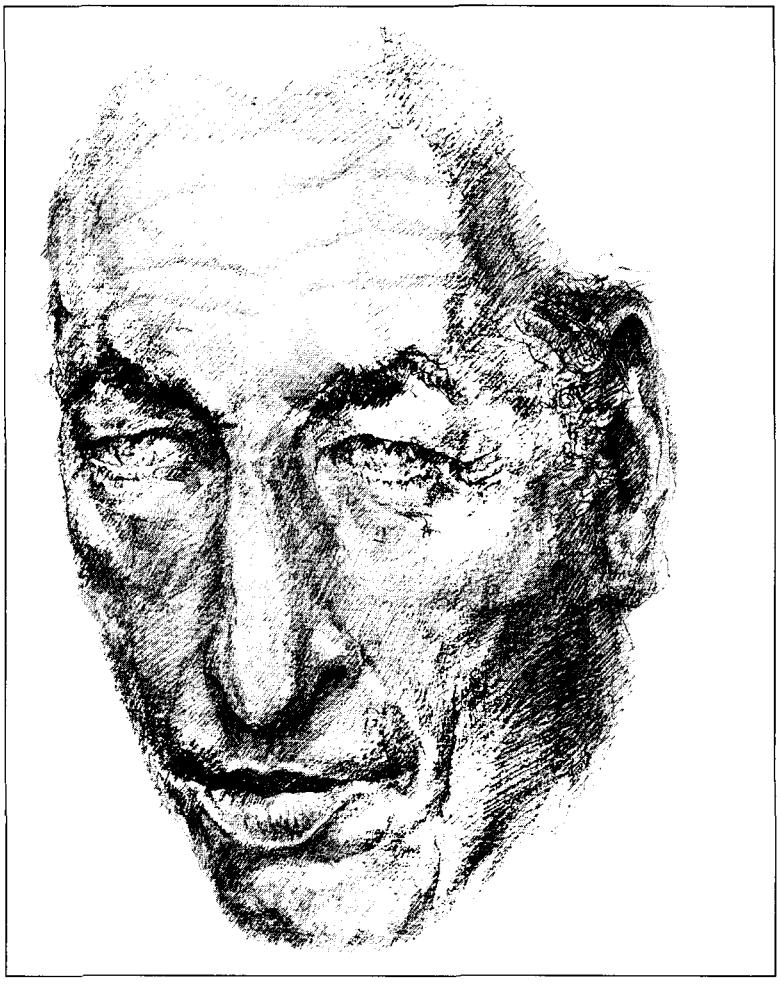
> What will happen will
> happen; the whore
> and the buffoon
> Will come off best; no
> dreamers, they
> cannot lose their
> dream
> And are at least likely to be reinstated in
> the new régime.

There, I thought with pleasure, goes Homer's Helen. The sentiment was one calculated to shock the house-tutor and his colleagues to the core. I was well and truly hooked.

A trip to the library turned up three titles: *Poems* (1935), *The Earth Compels* (1938) and *Autumn Journal* (1939). The first was checked out (to Tony, I correctly deduced), but I laid hands on the other two. I then redirected my search to the school bookstore. This literary oasis in the cold-showers-and-compulsory-games wilderness was largely the brainchild of Charterhouse's new young headmaster, Robert Birley, a liberal and ultra-civilized historian. Later translated to Eton, where he became known as "Red Robert," Birley had been the last person to see Guy Burgess before his defection, or so rumor alleged. His liking for modernist literature did not go down well with his more conservative subordinates, but for some of us *in statu pupillari* it was treasure from heaven.

A quick search of the shelves revealed three more works by MacNeice: *Letters from Iceland* (1937) and *I Crossed the Minch* (1938), a couple of travel books, the first written in collaboration with Auden; and a verse play, *Out of the Picture* (1937). I began with the play. This was a mistake. It nearly convinced me—but not quite—that MacNeice was indeed, as conventional wisdom asserted, no more than Auden writ small. A clumping political-cum-psychological allegory—including a quack psychiatrist, a cynical parrot, a mad prime minister, two murders, some mass hypnosis and a *dea ex machina* in the form of a portrait of Venus magically endowed with speech and motion—*Out of the Picture* embodied (as I later realized) one of MacNeice's most persistent delusions: that he was a dab hand at symbolism.

He wasn't. Most of his symbols were by Freud out of Tennyson—that is, pure mush; and his best-known experiment in the genre, the greatly overpraised radio drama *The Dark Tower*, threw Browning and Malory into the pot, and came up with a meaningless Quest minus a resolution. MacNeice's genius lay in a quite different direction. Its main ingredients were a gritty, observant realism, largely impervious to ideological fashions; a powerful sense of history, the natural outcome of his classical training; a sensuous delight in the natural world; a bright sardonic wit; extraordinary technical skill in composition; and what I still think of as the purest lyrical gift of any twentieth-century poet.



LOUIS MACNEICE BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

I can still recall, as though it was yesterday, the sheer delight—intellectual and emotional pleasure in perfect equipoise—with which I first encountered the poems in *The Earth Compels*. Sometimes it was a haunting turn of phrase with which I could identify ("the days of my youth, a sluice of hearing and seeing,/ the days of topspin drives and physical well-being"); sometimes it was the recognition of subtly anglicized classical prosody, as in the Sapphic stanza in "June Thunder":

> If only you would come and dare
> the crystal
> Rampart of rain and the bottomless
> moat of thunder,
> If only now you would come I
> should be happy
> Now if now only.

Poems such as this one also hinted strongly at another central element in MacNeice's creative universe: his passionate love for, and liking for, women. This struck me as a pleasant contrast to Auden, whose public-school mythologizing of the homintern I found instantly recognizable, being in the thick of a

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similar culture myself, and not my cup of tea. Watching with a cynical eye the washed-out and miserable-looking wives of the younger masters dutifully applauding on the touch-line during soccer matches, my mind on the girlfriend waiting for me back home, I would murmur my new mantra (from "Leaving Barra"): "While you are alive beyond question / Like the dazzle on the sea, my darling."

The poem which most unforgettably combined all MacNeice's varied talents, which hit me almost physically with its aching nostalgia and intricate perfection of structure, was "The Sunlight on the Garden." It is to be quoted in its totality or not at all, as easily from memory as from the printed page:

> The sunlight on the garden
> Hardens and grows cold,
> We cannot cage the minute
> Within its nets of gold,
> When all is told
> We cannot beg for pardon.
>
> Our freedom as free lances
> Advances towards its end:
> The earth compels, upon it
> Sonnets and birds descend;
> And soon, my friend,
> We shall have no time for dances.
>
> The sky was good for flying
> Defying the church bells
> And every evil iron
> Siren and what it tells:
> The earth compels,
> We are dying, Egypt, dying
>
> And not expecting pardon,
> Hardened in heart anew,
> But glad to have sat under
> Thunder and rain with you,
> And grateful too
> For sunlight on the garden.

MacNeice cunningly blends private and public here—nostalgia, tenderness, fatalism. (Was there ever a better encapsulation of pre-1939 European forebodings?) Even more impressively, MacNeice accomplishes this in a structure as complex and minutely regulated as the movement of a fine watch. The variations of rhythm (trochaic, iambic, choriambic: stressed or syncopated); the final and internal rhymes and assonances; the verbal echoes, alliterations and repetitions: all these elements, not forced or artificial but natural and inevitable, combine in a perfect artifact to leave (as Eliot put it) "the whole consort dancing together."

I have loved this poem, and drawn on it emotionally, for over half a century; but not until I read Jon Stallworthy's biography did I know that MacNeice wrote it for the wife who had lately left him—and their son—to marry another man. Does that knowledge deepen one's appreciation of it? Against the literary experts, my answer has to be: yes, it does, another layer of meaning has been added. Back in the early '40s, however, I was restricted to the poem itself, a delectable *Ding an sich* that I treasured like a rare jewel. And even so, I was beginning to sense not only a strong and positive reaction to MacNeice's poetry, but also a tantalizing and unexpected affinity with the man behind it.

MacNeice, as both Auden and Anthony Blunt found out the hard way, was a lover of women—was indeed, in Blunt's words, "always, totally and irredeemably heterosexual." He never fell for the ideological lure of Marxism, about which he was witty and devastating. (As late as 1982 Blunt, his old schoolfellow, described him as "politically incorrigible," and he should know.)

> But before you proclaim the millennium,
> my dear,
> Consult the barometer—
> This poise is perfect, but maintained
> For one day only.

MacNeice's alter ego in *I Crossed the Minch* remarks:

> It is wholly illogical to fight for the right unless one is financially incapable

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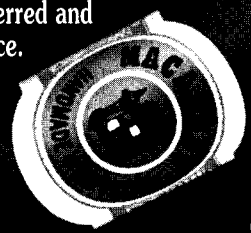

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of basking in the wrong.... You wait until I've spent all my capital. Then I'll have a conversion. Comme tous les autres

If I could sit in a garden shady
With a Horse's Neck or a White Lady
And snap my fingers like a Turk
To make the other bastards work,
Then I should feel extremely hearty;
But, as it is, I'll join the Party.

Both travel-books revealed a witty, imaginative, well-read social iconoclast. He was straight, but no bigot: his funniest persona among several is the chatterbox Hetty (hetero?) unloading her girlish gush on Nancy (Blunt) or Maisie (Auden): "I turned out the lamp and lay listening to the noise of the elements, at least I thought they were the elements until they suddenly said Amen and lapsed to silence." MacNeice also turned out to be a natural exile. His love-hate relationship with the conflicting halves of Ireland was memorably expressed in "Valediction," a poem which, as Stallworthy says, "has distressed and angered generations of Irish readers." Yet whatever we may feel about "inbred soul and climatic maleficence," who can deny that in Ireland, today more than ever, "arson and murder are legacies"?

It was *Autumn Journal*, that unique poetic essay in autobiography masquerading as a chronicle of autumnal England in the year of Munich, that hit home most to my adolescent self. For MacNeice turned out to have been not only a classicist, but also a teacher of classics, who now spoke, directly and unforgettably, to a boy whose passion for the ancient world was being undermined (and at times directly assaulted) by the old men—unimaginative, snobbish, class-ridden Anglicans all—who were teaching him. Here, now, was a scholar who, unbelievably, saw the ancient Greeks as I did, who had the same contempt for "the humanist in his room with Jacobean panels, / chewing his pipe and looking on a lazy quad," who

Chops the Ancient World to turn a sermon
To the greater glory of God.

The apologia that followed burnt itself into my brain forever:

But I can do nothing so useful or so
simple;
These dead are dead
And when I should remember the
paragons of Hellas
I think instead
Of the crooks, the adventurers, the
opportunists,
The careless athletes and the fancy
boys,
The hair-splitters, the pedants, the hard-
boiled sceptics
And the Agora and the noise
Of the demagogues and the quacks;
and the women pouring
Libations over graves
And the trimmers at Delphi and the
dummies at Sparta and lastly
I think of the slaves.
And how one can imagine oneself
among them
I do not know;
It was all so unimaginably different
And all so long ago.

Here was a man who could assure me, when I was being taught Plato's *Phaedo* by a committed Christian, and was having trouble with Socratic ideas and morality both, that

... reading Plato talking about his
Forms
To damn the artist touting round his
mirror,
I am glad that I have been left the
third best bed
And live in a world of error.
His world of capital initials, of transcendent
Ideas is too bleak;
For me there remain to all intents and
purposes
Seven days in the week
And no one Tuesday is another and you
destroy it
If you subtract the difference and relate
It merely to the Form of Tuesday. This
is Tuesday
The 25th of October, 1938.

MacNeice went on to express a preference for Aristotle, who scrapped the Form-in-Itself and "watched ... the natural world develop." Then he attacked education for its labels and clichés, its cutting of Gordian knots, its emphasis on the safe middle road. When I put some of these attitudes into an essay, I was asked where I'd found them. "Louis MacNeice." "I recall no Platonist or Aristotelian of that name." "He's a poet, sir." "Oh. A *poet*." Plato himself could hardly have been more damning.

My teacher would have been even more dismissive, I don't doubt, if he'd read MacNeice's hilarious account, in the same book-length poem, of his own classical education, so precisely, and horribly, like mine:

Which things being so, as we said when
we studied
The classics, I ought to be glad
That I studied the classics at Marlborough
and Merton,
Not everyone here having had
The privilege of learning a language
That is incontrovertibly dead,
And of carting a toy-box of hall-marked
marmoreal phrases
Around in his head.
We wrote compositions in Greek which
they said was a lesson
In logic and good for the brain;
We marched, counter-marched to the
field-marshal's blue-pencil baton,
We dressed by the right and we wrote
out the sentence again.
We learned that a gentleman never
misplaces his accents,
That nobody knows how to speak, much
less how to write
English who has not hob-nobbed with
the great-grandparents of English,
That the boy on the Modern Side is
merely a parasite
But the classical student is bred to the
purple, his training in syntax
Is also a training in thought
And even in morals; if called to the bar
or the barracks
He always will do what he ought.

There was much more than this in *Autumn Journal*: renewed shots at the Irish "who slouch round the world with a gesture and a brogue / And a faggot of useless memories"; wonderful lyric meditations on London; vivid reportage from Republican Barcelona, shortly before its fall to Franco, on the "pain and pride beyond the snow-lit / Sharp annunciation of the Pyrenees"; hints of personal tragedy. There was also that imaginative penetration—only properly appreciated years later, and best expressed in "Snow"—the sense that the "world is suddener than we fancy it," that "there is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses," the "drunkenness of things being various." In the last resort, though, it was MacNeice-as-classicist who made me, an adolescent confronting adulthood by way of a world war, face the fact that I had to meet this man, whose poetry had reshaped my way of looking at the world.

Events (as the Greeks knew so well) get foreshortened in memory. For years I have assumed, quite wrongly, that I set about chasing my famous poet in an immediate burst of enthusiasm after reading *Autumn Journal*. In fact, well over a year elapsed before our first meeting. I know this because what I remember, vividly, is walking up the rise of Wellington Place in St. John's Wood on a damp gray afternoon, and suddenly realizing that the tall, stoop-shouldered man ahead of me, who was about to turn into No. 10, the man with his leather-elbowed sports jacket and long gray-streaked hair, was MacNeice himself. The location gives a *terminus post quem* for the incident: Louis and Hedli, as Stallworthy notes, only moved here in January 1943. It must have been not long afterwards that Muriel Spark found herself in this same house, staying overnight with the Mac-

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Neices' mother's help while the family was away: "I touched the furniture. I tried the pencils which were lying on the desk, with an inward, inexplicable satisfaction. I had never met a real poet. I have always known that this occasion vitally strengthened my resolve to become a writer." I know just how she felt.

What I didn't know, luckily for me, was MacNeice's terrifying reputation as a snubber of literary or social bores. Anthony Thwaite, from 1958 his junior colleague in the BBC, has immortalized the "disdainful, supercilious camel look" he regularly assumed as a weapon of defense in bars, against Grub Street climbers, pretentious poetasters and the retailers of vicious gossip. Thwaite broke the ice by chatting about rugby. By sheer chance I picked on something even better, MacNeice's fascination with the technical tools of his or anyone else's trade. I caught him up, took a deep breath, and said: "Mr. MacNeice?" I was met with a chilly "Ye-es?" Very fast, before he could stop me, I made my pitch: "I've been fascinated by the way you adapt classical metres to English stress rhythm. No one else I know's been doing this since Gerard Manley Hopkins. I'm particularly interested in Pindar. Could you spare a little time to talk to me?" He sized me up, coolly. I hadn't expected the opaque brown eyes; and he looked to me, then, considerably older than the mere 36 he actually was. We were standing outside No. 10: a tall, dark, shabby house. Then he grinned. "You'd better come in," he said.

I'd largely forgotten the inside of MacNeice's house, until Spark's description triggered memories. The big elegant writing-desk and row upon row of books came back to me, along with an ill-lit, semi-Bohemian lack of essential furniture; but also—something Spark was too polite to mention—a faint but unforgettable odor of mouse-turds, dust and indoor dogs. (One of the funniest moments in Stallworthy's book records a huge effort, several years later, to clean the place up before Eliot came to dinner. By then the mice were nesting in Hedli's grand piano.) MacNeice took me through to his study, sat me down, vanished briefly to return with two bottles of beer and glasses. We sat down across from each other at the desk. "Now then," he said. For an hour we went at it non-stop: dactylo-epitrites, triadic composition, sprung rhythm, diaeresis and caesura, stress and ictus. From Pindar we moved to Horace and the translation of Greek lyric patterns to Latin.

As MacNeice talked, the Irish stresses in his voice became more marked. In the middle of a fascinating disquisition on the Second Asclepiadean he was interrupted by a rather disheveled red-haired lady with the reminder that they were going out in half an hour. "Yes, right, I hadn't forgotten." he said. He neither introduced his wife to me nor explained to her who I was or what I was doing there. I said I had to be going. "We must talk some more," the Famous Poet said. "Catch me any lunchtime at the Stag or the George." I was on the train home before I realized that I had no idea which Stag and George he was talking about. Also, I had neglected to tell him my name.

I soon learned a lot about the area round the BBC's Rothwell House; and I did indeed catch him in the Stag or the George on quite a few occasions. There wasn't the first fine metrical rapture of that initial confrontation, but as pub confrères we did pretty well; and I learned how to drink beer, a useful preparation for military service. These meetings continued, intermittently, after I joined the RAF, since part of my training was in the operations room of Fighter Command H.Q. just outside London. But then I was posted to the Far East for an extended tour of duty. On my return I spent six years studying classics at Cambridge, and we fell out of touch. When I moved into MacNeice's orbit

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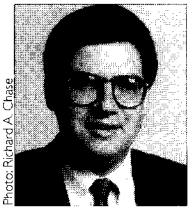

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again, it was as something he normally couldn't stand: a London literary journalist.

Still, by then we had a hands-on experience of Greece in common. I'd missed him by a couple of months when he took over as Director of the British Institute in Athens; I was one of the few people in the mid-'50s who wholeheartedly admired the volume of poems, *Ten Burnt Offerings*, that his eighteen months in Greece produced. I tried to tell him; he didn't want to hear. He was going through a depressed period, and drinking heavily: caught in the middle part of life that he said was bad for poets and where, for him as for Dante, reality was a dark wood and the loss of one's bearings. Not surprisingly, his long sequel to *Autumn Journal*, written in 1954, was in *terza rima*. I reviewed this for the London *Times* (strict anonymity, as for obituaries: I couldn't tell him I'd done it) and, again, was one of the few who saw its achievements—the dazzling technical mastery, the bitter, penetrating meditation on ancient Athens and, above all, the close of Canto VII, now often excerpted as "Fanfare for the Makers," with its marvelous coda:

> As horsemen fashion horses while they ride,
> As climbers climb a peak because it is there,
> As life can be confirmed even in suicide:
>
> To make is such. Let us make. And set the weather fair.

In his two last collections, *Solstices* (1961) and *The Burning Perch* (1963), there occurred an extraordinary rekindling of MacNeice's lyric genius. What lay behind this death-obsessed flare-up I could not know until much later. Then, in the spring of 1963, I and my family emigrated to Greece. Here I found myself much in the company of two immensely talented writers, Kevin Andrews and Patrick Leigh Fermor, both of whom, as it happened, had known MacNeice well, and regaled me with anecdotes, some enlightening, some enigmatic, of his Athens period. MacNeice himself had taken, as epigraph for one of his books, a quotation from *Agamemnon*, "A boy pursues a flying bird"—which was exactly how I had come to feel about him.

This impression was intensified when, early that autumn, the news reached our island that MacNeice had died of viral pneumonia. He caught the illness while recording down a deep Yorkshire pothole with a BBC unit, and he left behind a radio play, *Persons from Porlock*, that recreated not only his major psychological obsessions, but also something uneasily akin, in symbolic terms, to the circumstances of his death. We were left with the gift of his poetry, and the nagging conundrum of his life. The gift abides and, thanks to Jon Stallworthy's painstaking research, some of the conundrum has been solved.

MacNeice was an intensely private person, but he suffered from what Auden called "the intolerable neural itch," the compulsive urge to put that privacy at risk in pursuit of his creative vision. Overtly in at least three poems—"Carrickfergus" (1937), "Autobiography" (1940), "Carrick Revisited" (1945)—and by implication in many others, he worried away at his background and childhood memories. In 1940, leaving America for wartime England, and at the conclusion of a wrenching love affair with Eleanor Clark, he put together some autobiographical chapters, suppressed at the time for fear of hurting his family, and posthumously edited by E.R. Dodds as *The Strings Are False* (1965). His intention, made clear in a letter to Eleanor and several times repeated, was to wipe the page clean, to bury his early life, to make a new start: "It will finish up the old period & I shan't be troubled again by the things that are going into it. No more past."

But the past was not so easily exorcized, and there is ample evidence that right to the end MacNeice, like Dylan Thomas's gentleman in that notorious sonnet, "lay graveward with his Furies." Split allegiances formed the fabric of his world. He was "born in Belfast between the mountain and the gantries" in 1907, a child of the Anglo-Irish Protestant ascendancy: his father, an Anglican clergyman, in 1934 became Bishop of Down and Connor and Dromore. An ardent Home Ruler, Bishop MacNeice could not forgive Sir Edward (later Lord) Carson for "destroying the unity of Ireland," and refused the government's request that a Union Jack should fly over his grave.

But the family's ancestors had roots in Connemara, and Catholic Eire pulled more strongly on the skeptical poet's heartstrings than he admitted even to himself. Like James Joyce, he might beat his nurse, but he never entirely broke free of her or her faith. The ghost of a complex religious dilemma keeps haunting MacNeice's poems: not only Catholic (country) versus Protestant (family), but, worse, religious belief versus the ironic intellectual skepticism sharpened by his classical training at Oxford. Brain told him one thing, heart another. The conflict produced some great poems, but could not make for peace of mind:

> Blessed are those who believe and ask no leave
> Of hand or eye, for whom all water is wine,
> Who whatever the weight on the heart have the heart to wait
> For the clouds to lift—a gift that was never mine.

This stanza comes, fittingly enough, in a poem called "Didymus" (1950) (the Doubting Thomas of the Gospels), which, crucial though it is, Stallworthy doesn't discuss. If there is a real weakness in his otherwise thorough biography, it is the way he hovers round this central problem without ever really coming to grips with it. But Stallworthy's book is certainly the most detailed, comprehensive and balanced account of MacNeice yet published.

Other factors were more purely personal. Louis had an older brother who suffered from acute Downs Syndrome in an age when what people then called "mongolism" was very little understood. Louis himself regarded his brother with powerful if involuntary horror and repulsion (not least since they were often made to sleep in the same room), and his prospective mother-in-law badgered him with demands for proof that degenerate genes were not hereditary in the family. Worse still, his mother, whom he loved passionately, had a botched hysterectomy in 1912 and died two years later; Louis became convinced that his own difficult birth had somehow contributed to her death. In "Autobiography" (1940), with its recurrent leitmotif "*Come back early or never come,*" he wrote:

> When I was five the black dreams came;
> Nothing after was quite the same.
>
> *Come back early or never come. . .*
>
> When I woke they did not care;
> Nobody, nobody was there.

His father (who, as he later confessed, terrified him) remarried; his stepmother was kind, but strict, distant and puritanical. It hardly requires Freudian theory to deduce that the way was being paved for the compulsive affairs and failed marriages (and the equally compulsive drinking and social remoteness) that marked his adult life. The inner self that he kept hidden from men he poured out, often with simultaneous declarations of love, to a remarkable number of women; his letters to Eleanor Clark are especially striking in this regard.

Yet at first he was a shy romantic looking for, in his own words, "the not impos-

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sible She." He found her in the person of Giovanna Marie Thérèse Babette Ezra: "Marietta" in *The Strings Are False*, "Mary" to the world at large, the stepdaughter of J.D. Beazley, the great Oxford archaeologist, and the daughter of an eccentric (and, as things turned out, malevolent) Jewess from Smyrna. At first the latter didn't take Louis seriously, remarking that he was "just a stream to sit by and throw pebbles into." Later, when he had had more evidence than was comfortable of her machinations, he added her, anonymously, as an item in "Auden and MacNeice: Their Last Will and Testament," the coda to *Letters from Iceland*:

> And to the most mischievous woman now alive
> We leave a lorry-load of moral mud
> And may her Stone Age voodoo never thrive.

But despite Mrs. Beazley's voodoo, and the horrified reaction of the Reverend J.F. MacNeice to the idea of his son marrying a Jewess, Louis did just that. He carried off his prize—delicate, doll-like, the best dancer in Oxford, an exotic version of Zuleika Dobson—to Birmingham, where his First in Greats had won him a lectureship under E.R. Dodds, another Irishman, the extraordinary author of *The Greeks and the Irrational* and an authority on extrasensory perception and parapsychology. They took to each other on first sight.

Dodds later gave a shrewd appraisal of the marriage, described by MacNeice in retrospect as "an idyll five years long." The couple set up house, Dodds tells us in *Time Was Away* (1974), "in a converted stable where they played an endless innocent game of 'keeping house' like a pair of grown-up children: more like children, perhaps, than was altogether healthy on a long-term view.... In this domestic charade Louis played his part willingly enough: he would always throw himself with gusto into any game of make-believe." With the arrival of a baby, the make-believe wore a little thin; and when Mary walked out on Louis and the baby to marry an American football player, it was blown away altogether.

As in the case of Evelyn Waugh, this defection marked a turning point in MacNeice's life. He took up with Nancy Coldstream (née Sharp), married and the mother of two, who went to the Hebrides with him and did the illustrations for *I Crossed the Minch*. He had an affair with Mary Hunt, a beautiful blond one-legged model for Augustus John. There was Eleanor Clark in America (this one, to judge from the correspondence, largely in the head). Back in England there were Eileen Phillips and Margaret Gardiner (a one-night mistake due to drink), and at last a second marriage, to the red-headed singer Hedli Anderson. Infidelities and alcoholism accelerated together. The list concluded with a bunch of BBC actresses, in particular Mary Wimbush, for whom Louis left Hedli, and who inspired some of the great poems of his final years.

MacNeice had an immense appetite for life, a sensuous delight in the variety of appearances. Who else would have perceived "the sun / scrambling the laburnum tree, a breakfast for the gluttonous eye"? Yet behind this vitality there lurked the aching search for some missing need imperfectly realized: the mother and wife he had lost, a true national identity, a reconciliation of faith and skepticism, that land beyond the rainbow in the West—the Hesperides or Tir na nOg—that might have been remembered out of Homer yet bore more than a passing resemblance to Connemara.

What he found in the end, unhappily, was "the last way out that leads not out but in," a dead end that offered nothing except the temporary anodyne of "bitter or mild, armagnac, ouzo, stout," the despair engendered by "sensation and then again sensation." Like many, he glimpsed something of what he needed in Greece; but Greece was an interlude only, a chance to brood over Byron and Odysseus, romantic failures both. His final poetic efflorescence carried a grim message, with Charon as messenger: "If you want to die, you will have to pay for it." He did. During his final illness—so weakened had his system been by cigarettes and heavy drinking—antibiotics had no effect on him. Lament for the Makers: when MacNeice mourned Dylan Thomas he knew what he was talking about.

Posterity has obstinately refused to acknowledge MacNeice's huge achievement as a poet. There are several possible reasons for this. Professional critics like pigeon-holes, and it is hard to fit so ironic, skeptical and uncommitted a body of work into an easily definable category. His inclusion as the back legs of that pantomime horse the MacSpaunday must be partly responsible: too easy to write him off as a minor follower of Auden who never quite made it, to damn him with faint praise. This is what Robyn Marsack did in *The Cave of Making* (1982): "If MacNeice is not in the company of Yeats and Eliot, among modern poets, his achievement is still considerable."

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MacNeice's independence of mind is also sometimes seen as suspect, indicating a lack of depth. He would not commit to any creed, but preferred (to paraphrase a much-quoted line) escaping, with his dog, to the other side of the fair. The English find it hard to deal with his Irishness, regarding it (Shaw has a lot to answer for here) as something slippery and sentimental, colorful rhetoric crossed with the Celtic Twilight. By the Irish, on the other hand, MacNeice has often been dismissed as no more than a tourist in Ireland. In *Time Was Away*, Derek Mahon argues that MacNeice's public school and Oxford background, plus his subsequent employment by the BBC and the British Council, "made him a fully paid-up member of the British academic, artistic and administrative Establishment."

Moreover, his publishers have perpetuated this low estimate by relegating his *Collected Poems* to an unappetizing volume done on the cheap: small print, crowded pages, inartistic run-overs and (in the paperback version) binding liable to premature disintegration. The contrast with Auden, now coming out in a multi-volume variorum edition, is painful and instructive. E.R. Dodds's editing, too, left a lot to be desired: his choice of early poems was erratic, and at least one of the very best ("Thank you, my friendly daemon," from *The Earth Compels*) he unaccountably consigned to oblivion. American universities take little stock in MacNeice: search the poetry shelves of any good bookstore, and you're not often likely to find him.

And yet, as I have proved time and again, a reading from MacNeice's work hits young audiences, students in particular, with the force of a revelation. After a diet of arhythmic cerebral chat, self-regarding emotional confessions and chopped-up prose descending the page in a thin typographical trickle, MacNeice's complicated prosody, incantatory rhymes and sheer intellectual control are as welcome as a cloudburst after a long drought.

In fact, there are signs that MacNeice's reputation may at long last be on the rise. Interestingly, what is being appreciated, more and more, is the power of his intellect. It was entirely apposite that Alan Heuser chose to republish *Selected Literary Criticism* (1987) and *Selected Prose* (1990), where this intellectual quality was most apparent. Unlike any of his contemporaries of the '30s, Auden included, MacNeice could boast a first-class analytical mind as well as academic credentials; he is the only creative writer I can think of whose work suggests that he actually got out of Greats that logical rigor and dialectical skill which are commonly identified as the degree's proper end-product.

Still, to extrapolate from this a notion of MacNeice as a metaphysical poet, as W.T. McKinnon did in *Apollo's Blended Dream* (1971), is to miss his mocking, particularist attitude to abstract theory. This was expressed with characteristic wit and pith in *Autumn Journal*:

> So blow the bugles over the
> metaphysicians,
> Let the pure mind return to the
> Pure Mind;
> I must be content to remain in the world
> of Appearance
> And sit on the mere appearance of a
> behind.
> But in case you should think my education
> was wasted
> I hasten to explain
> That having once been to the University
> of Oxford
> You can never really again
> Believe anything that anyone says and that
> of course is an asset
> In a world like ours;
> Why bother to water a garden
> That is planted with paper flowers?

Jon Stallworthy, no mean poet himself, isolates many of the qualities central to MacNeice's work: the wit and the wild gaiety, the constant Stoic awareness of death (someone once described his vitality as that "of Cleopatra waiting for the asp"), the exuberantly observant eye, the physical delight in "the drunkenness of things being various." He wrote too much and he knew it—but then, as Stallworthy says, so did Wordsworth. Stallworthy asks the right question, too: "How many English-speaking poets of this century have written better long poems than *Autumn Journal* or better short poems than 'Snow,' 'The Sunlight on the Garden,' 'The Strand,' 'House on a Cliff,' or 'Charon'?" (And there are more he might have mentioned, from "The Brandy Glass" to "The Truisms.") The answer is, very few, and those cases are debatable: Eliot and David Jones in the first category, Yeats and Auden in the second.

If we are determined to categorize MacNeice, the characteristics noted by Stallworthy, above all his death-obsessed delight in the beauty of the transient moment, suggest a creator not so much metaphysical as existential. It would not, I think, be going too far to describe MacNeice as not only one of the first, but incomparably the finest, of the existentialist poets. Yet such a label, though useful, doesn't even begin to explain the extraordinary attractiveness of so much of MacNeice's poetry, the way it tugs on one's emotions, its sheer mnemonic quality. Cyril Connolly once complained that there had been no poet since Auden whose work he actually wanted to remember, to quote by heart. He had a point—poetry's repetitive and verbal magic, its incantatory element, has been out of fashion for far too long—but he forgot MacNeice. Of no modern poet, not even Eliot, do I retain so many lines, often without any conscious effort at memorization.

I find MacNeice's ironic humanism and tough-minded nostalgia agreeable, but those aren't the qualities that have imprinted poem after poem on my mind like sustaining talismans. "Thalassa," perhaps the last poem he ever wrote, says it all:

> Run out the boat, my broken comrades;
> Let the old seaweed crack, the surge
> Burgeon oblivious of the last
> Embarkation of feckless men,
> Let every adverse force converge—
> Here we must needs embark again.
>
> Run up the sail, my heartsick comrades;
> Let each horizon tilt and lurch—
> You know the worst: your wills are fickle,
> Your values blurred, your hearts impure
> And your past life a ruined church—
> But let your poison be your cure.
>
> Put out to sea, ignoble comrades,
> Whose record shall be noble yet;
> Butting through scarps of moving marble
> The narwhal dares us to be free;
> By a high star our course is set,
> Our end is Life. Put out to sea.

I cannot, even today, recall these stanzas—found on MacNeice's desk after his death—without a catch in the throat, a shiver in the spine. What we are looking at here, as in "The Sunlight on the Garden," is a rare and perfect marriage of form and substance.

MacNeice had a lifelong love affair, more constant than any of his emotional and erotic relationships, with the power of words. Poets, as he well knew, are indeed the true magicians, and Plato, like every other advocate of a closed society, had good reason to shun them. MacNeice's preference for Aristotle was no accident. Dante's "master of those who know," the scientist and thinker who "took the horse from the shelf and let it gallop," who understood the incorrigible plurality of things, yet could sort them into categories that even medieval theologians could accept, came perhaps closer than anyone to reconciling the conflicts in this great and melancholy poet's heart.

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A Believer in the City

By Robert Alter

A Lifetime Burning in Every Moment: From the Journals of Alfred Kazin selected and edited by Alfred Kazin

(HarperCollins, 341 pp., $26)

In over half a century of activity as a writer, Alfred Kazin has often been associated with "the New York intellectuals." In some minds, Kazin-Howe-Trilling-Rahv and company form a continuous blur. Kazin himself has intermittently acted as their chronicler in four memoiristic volumes. *A Lifetime Burning in Every Moment* offers a very different mode of self-presentation from his sundry memoirs, and it makes clear that in some fundamental ways he is quite unlike the secular, worldly, politically minded literary critics with whom he is usually linked.

This new book of diaries, it must be said, is a slippery book in regard to genre, because the nature of the selecting and the editing announced in its subtitle remains elusive. There is no indication of what proportion of the actual journals is reproduced here; and in any case "reproduced" may not be the right word, for there are signs that at least some of the journal entries have been retrospectively altered to incorporate the wisdom of hindsight. Even the chronology is a little uncertain: the book is arranged in five chronological units of greatly varying spans, from 1938 to 1995, but individual journal entries are undated, and, within each larger unit, quite a few of the entries appear to have been rearranged thematically, out of chronological sequence. It is surely a writer's prerogative to reorder raw autobiographical materials in this fashion, but readers should be forewarned that what they will encounter here is not a gathering of untouched candid-camera shots from early manhood to old age but a composed self-portrait. *A Lifetime Burning* presents the image of the writer's inner life that the writer chooses to present to the world.

Some aspects of that image are perfectly consonant with what one knows of Kazin from his previous books. He repeatedly conveys the sense of a man who lives constantly and passionately with literature, which is an increasingly rare aptitude when so many of those who profess literature in the academy seem to have little use for it. In *Starting Out in the Thirties* and *New York Jew*, Kazin demonstrated deft skill in portraying the writers he met whose work engaged him. In these journals, with the focus more on the observer than on what he observes, the confessions of enthusiasm sometimes sound like notes of an intellectual groupie, such as this comment on first meeting Hannah Arendt in the 1940s: "Darkly handsome, bountifully interested in everything, this forty-year-old German refugee with a strong accent and such intelligence—thinking positively cascaded out of her in waves—that I was enthralled, by no means unerotically."

Kazin is an enthusiast. He is for or against. His observations on the books he has been reading are alternately an expression of excitements and an attempt to get writers in proper focus, and also a reveling in the pleasure of that very effort of discrimination. Some of this is no more than a restatement of commonplaces: "If Kafka became the head and symbol of 'the age of anxiety,' Orwell was the hero of whatever fight literature in our ghastly time has put up against totalitarianism." "The tyranny of love in Proust fills all the spaces once occupied by custom, law, religion." But elsewhere his formulations show real critical edge, as when he remarks of Harold Brodkey, "I see him not as an author in command of his material but as a character looking for an author to do him justice."

Kazin is even sharper on the other Harold: "What he does is to put the head of Harold Bloom right down on the poem, imprints on it his own mental formation, his signature invocation of Emerson-Whitman-Nietzsche-Pater.... I do not understand what this inspiring procession of names in Bloom's special code refers to outside of his need to be one of the procession." This last objection flows from Kazin's underlying sense of the purpose of criticism, which is to register a deep, open attentiveness to the imaginative authority of the particular work. His lapidary comment on Emily Dickinson nicely illustrates this attentiveness: "An explosion of concentrated material for a moment ... that makes a wholly new myth and mental order of things. You see life her way and not in the old way, yours."

What, for Kazin, is the point of writing about such things, or about anything? Like everyone who writes for publication, he is surely interested in audiences and approval, is actuated in part by, let us say, professional motives. But what this selection of his journals highlights is that writing is, for him, before all else a vocation in the strictly theological sense. "Writing is my life, the one steadiness I have," he observes in 1946, at a moment when he is suspended between marriages and between phases in his life. The feeling of steadiness comes from his conviction that writing (and the reading that is necessary for writing) is his ordained task, the thing he has come into the world to do. Thus, after the breakup of his second marriage: "I will not give up on my book, my son, on all those people I love and who love me. I have work to do.... God, my God, there is nothing to do with this life but to think, to understand, to be aware—to love the predicament of being alive." Actual prayer occurs in these journals with surprising frequency, sometimes, as here, in moments of resolution and affirmation, sometimes out of acute pain and loneliness. ("In this monotonously anguishing world one needs another language. One is desperate for grace.")

The writer who emerges from Kazin's selected journals is, unlike anyone else associated with the old *Partisan Review* (except perhaps Saul Bellow), a man steeped in reverence for the sensory world, for the eternal order of things behind it and for literature as the tentative articulation of a bridge between the two. Though the title of Kazin's new book is taken from T.S. Eliot's "East Coker," the vitalistic faith it expresses sounds closer to D.H. Lawrence: "But if God is life, a great blaze of life, a surcharge.... If you believe in God, you are continually exposed to and can never deny this great and terrible radiance of sheer being—everywhere."

Kazin's books repeatedly, stridently, deliciously affirm his identity as a Jew, but it is interesting to observe that the affirmation of that identity is virtually irrelevant to the religious vision of *A Lifetime Burning*. Treading in the ashes of European Jewry at the end of the war, he is recurrently troubled by the Holocaust, often reflects on the peculiar fate of the Jews at the crossroads of history, and several times comments with approval on

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the familial style of group solidarity cultivated by Jews. Kazin responded to the ghastly fate of Europe's Jews long before most of his contemporaries saw fit to address the subject, and this is surely admirable. But his journals, or at any rate the selection of them that he has chosen to present to the public, reveal a writer engaged only episodically in the contemplation of history and political events.

The predominant objects of his interest are his sundry aesthetic and intellectual enthusiasms and, above all, his quest for a way to reach out to God. Though he thinks of himself as a believer, "I have trouble knowing why I believe (when I do).... I do not share the confidence of Jews who are sure of the Covenant, of Christians sure that Jesus incarnates the word made flesh." In a later entry, he states this predicament of a purely personal belief more extremely: "Being religiously 'Jewish' in this 'Christian' society can be so private as to be almost inarticulate." There is something a little odd about this remark. For all its deficiencies and inauthenticities, American Jewry has developed vigorous and even original forms of religious expression. But Kazin, evidently by choice, has remained apart from Jewish collective experience, and he has not much informed himself about the Jewish heritage. His friend Edmund Wilson, when he was busy acquiring Hebrew, once chided Kazin on his lack of Jewish knowledge.

There are many comments in these journals about individual figures, groups and politics that one might want to debate, but for a book chiefly conceived as a testament of faith, debate seems beside the point. Indeed, *A Lifetime Burning* compels one to revise certain preconceptions about what it means for Kazin to be a critic. If the task of the critic is to make discriminations, to pronounce judgments, to argue for particular interpretations, the self-portrait in these pages is rather of a man who uses the instruments of writing to try to make sense, first, of the very gift of consciousness in himself and, then, of how writers have variously sought to articulate their own consciousness of the world against the background of eternity.

The last entry in the book is a reflection on how literature, in distinction to science and its dedication to objective demonstration, avails itself of a "cardinal human loneliness." It does this, Kazin remarks, drawing on his own lifetime of struggle with the medium of writing, "with language that is always failing and stumbling, breaking the writer's heart with its mere approximations to the thing in his mind. Besides, language is always asserting its primitive authority, is a halting servant but can be a terrible master." This is powerfully resonant, but it is a little bleak.

It becomes bleaker still when he goes on to speak of the failure of expectations and the "all too real fall of man" that each of us is said to experience in introspection. Like most religious views of literature, this has the effect of giving short shrift to the social (and comic) functions of literature, just as the understandable stress on the inevitable, heartbreaking inadequacy of all writing does not do justice to the great masters who miraculously get it just right—Pope, Proust, Mallarmé, Yeats—and who revel in the sheer exuberance of linguistic invention—Rabelais, Joyce, Nabokov and, above all, Shakespeare.

There are, of course, central writers in our tradition who are obsessed with a transcendent realm (Blake, Dickinson) or, failing that, on a realm of negative transcendence (Melville, Kafka). But any literary criticism enamored of the transcendent can scarcely accommodate the bracingly secular and worldly impulse in Western literature. Writers such as Fielding, Diderot, Stendhal and Henry James explore the quandaries of men and women living in the here-and-now of society, with the limitations and the resources of their imperfect human intelligence, and without resort to divinity. Indeed, modern literature has long been the most subtle vehicle for skepticism, and in our own century, certainly, the skeptical uses of imaginative literature have been pushed to a variety of extremes.

Yet *A Lifetime Burning* is scarcely intended as a comprehensive account of the meaning of engagement in literature. What it does evoke, quite poignantly, is how writing and reading and writing about reading can serve the most serious spiritual ends for this post-traditional Jew, who is a kind of hidden stranger among his New York intellectual peers.

ROBERT ALTER's translation of Genesis, accompanied by a literary commentary, will be published by W.W. Norton in September.

Bull in the China Shop

BY ANDREW J. NATHAN

The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy by Michael H. Hunt

(Columbia University Press, 343 pp., $34.50)

Weaving the Net: Conditional Engagement with China edited by James Shinn

(Council on Foreign Relations, 284 pp., $19.95)

During the recent crisis in the Taiwan Strait, every hypothesis was put forward to explain Beijing's behavior—historic resentment, antipathy to Taiwan's democracy, febrile nationalism, the internal power struggle. Every hypothesis, that is, except that, in trying to gain control over an island 100 miles from its shores, an island that General Douglas MacArthur called "an unsinkable aircraft carrier," China might be pursuing its national interest.

In the 1950s, the United States declared the status of Taiwan to be "unsettled," and built air bases there, signed a defense treaty with the Kuomintang government, installed electronic intelligence listening posts and airlifted CIA-trained guerrillas from the island into Tibet. In the 1960s the Taiwan government landed amphibious guerrilla teams on the Chinese coast, while the United States used Taiwan to spy on China, to broadcast anti-communist propaganda and to support the American role in Vietnam.

Although at peace today, China faces, on or near its borders, eight of the most formidable armies in the world: those of the United States, Japan, Russia, India, Vietnam, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan. None is about to attack China, but each has threatened China's security in this century and may well do so in the next century. Russia could recover its strength and resume its confrontation with China over border issues, the security of the Russian Far East and geostrategic influence in inner and south Asia.

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India could go nuclear (if it has not already) and increase its threat to Pakistan, one of China's few allies, and thus to Chinese power in inner Asia and control over Tibet and Xinjiang. Between China and Korea, and China and Vietnam, there are plenty of issues, including border disputes, treatment of cross-border populations (Chinese in Vietnam, Koreans in China), control over sea lanes and underwater oil resources and security ties with other major powers, any of which may become the occasion for the smaller countries to assert their independence from their giant neighbor.

But the worst threats, in the Chinese view of the future, come from the United States and Japan. Either American hostility to China will grow until it moves to contain China with Japanese help, or it will continue its long post-Vietnam withdrawal from Asia and leave Japan to take care of itself. Since the Japanese do not trust China any more than the Chinese trust Japan, this would trigger Japanese rearmament and a renewal of the historic Sino-Japanese struggle for regional supremacy. Taiwan is unlikely to attack China on its own (though Chinese defense planners do not forget that for three decades that was precisely the declared plan of Taiwan's leaders); but situated across a narrow body of water from a region of China that is prosperous and difficult to defend, Taiwan is always in a position to threaten the mainland by offering military, intelligence and propaganda facilities to someone else. China's security interests clash in some (but not all) respects with those of other regional actors, but they certainly clash with Taiwan's interest in its own autonomy and with the American interest in a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue, even if that means frustrating Chinese control over Taiwan.

To meet these eventualities, China is modernizing its military. In the post-Gulf war world of the computerized battlefield, this is an expensive process. "China threat" theorists point out that Chinese defense budgets have increased steadily since 1989, and that actual expenditures exceed those publicly budgeted by a factor of two to four or more. In inflation-adjusted terms, however, Chinese expenditures remain well under the sum of $282 billion a year that the United States spends on its military, and by any but the most extreme estimates, it remains below even the Japanese defense budget of $42 billion. (In per-soldier terms, the expenditures are even less.) China's military is heavily engaged in internal security tasks. Most of the army continues to be equipped with old-fashioned, Chinese-made, Soviet-style tanks and planes. China has a rudimentary nuclear deterrent but no aircraft carriers or smart bombs. It can barely coordinate different service arms in combat. Far from presenting an expansionist threat, China's military is hard-pressed to keep order in its own turbulent society, maintain control over its minority territories of Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia, establish authority in Hong Kong and regain Taiwan.

To identify Chinese security interests is not to counsel concessions. Nor does identifying Chinese interests exculpate the harsh political system of China, which is brazen in its abuses of human rights. Its policy of military and political pressure on Taiwan is arguably immoral and illegal, a violation of Taiwanese self-determination; and it may also be a failure, since it has resulted in a stiffening of Taiwanese and American resolve. But none of this means that Chinese policy is irrational. It is entirely rational, in the sense that it deploys available means to pursue perceived interests. These interests might have been perceived differently if the world had been a more benevolent place or if Chinese leaders had been more visionary; but the world is a dangerous place and the Chinese leaders are realists.

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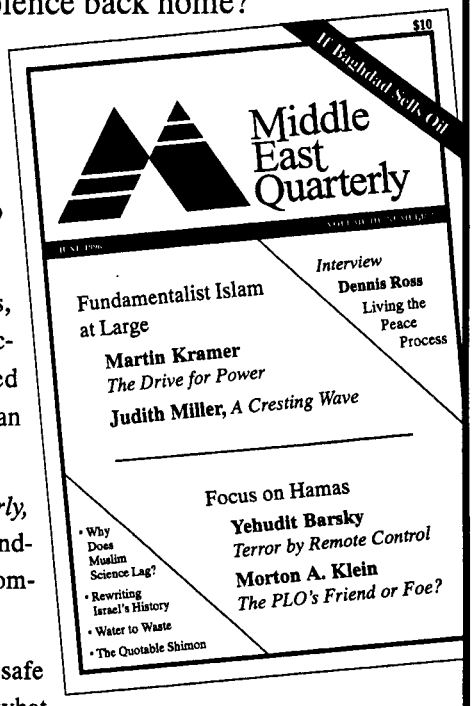

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It is possible to disagree with something and yet to see that it is rational; or it should be possible. Unfortunately, the China policy of the United States does not see the reason in the Chinese actions with which it disagrees. (The only rationality that the administration seems willing to attribute to China is economic rationality, if that.) In assuming Chinese irrationality, moreover, American policy toward China has assumed a cast that is more therapeutic than strategic. "Constructive engagement" tries to punish China for its tantrums, then salve its feelings with assurances of regard. It is as if China were neurotic rather than vulnerable, and could be made to feel secure through expressions of esteem despite its circumference of actual and potential enemies and its relative military and economic weakness. American policy seems to do everything but talk consistently and clearly about where American and Chinese interests overlap and where they clash.

Michael Hunt's new book on the roots of Chinese communist foreign policy is not much help. The book, a collection of essays by a leading historian of foreign policy, covers the chronological ground of China's historic quest for security from the nineteenth century to the early 1950s. Hunt believes that there are "continuities in the diplomatic style" of the early Communist Party and the leaders today. Looking at newly available documentation of the history of the Communist Party in China, in order to "get inside the head of actors" and see how their "perceptions shaped their behavior," Hunt finds that Chinese communist foreign policy-making was complex, disorderly and governed by ideology and personality.

Hunt derives his stress on personality from new evidence about Mao's role, material he reports in the latter part of the book. CCP policy toward the Soviet Union and United States was "inseparable from Mao's command of the party," he finds. Chinese foreign policy through the early 1950s was "the product of a convergence of ideological currents and political circumstances with personality." Mao dominated Chinese communist foreign policy-making from the mid-1930s on. He decided on the arm's-length relationship with Stalin in the 1930s and 1940s and on the charm offensive of the 1940s toward the United States. After 1949, he made the fateful decisions on Chinese entry into the Korean War, the Sino-Soviet split and the opening to the United States. But Hunt's picture of Mao's personality is too bland to explain such choices. He finds that Mao believed in consensus among the party leadership, in patriotism, voluntarism and populism; that there was an anarchic strain in his thought; and that he had limited knowledge of the outside world and a serious commitment to Marxism-Leninism. Considering the information available about Mao's temper, cruelty, deviousness, love of conflict and appetite for risk-taking, this is a weak pivot for an argument that personality decides policy.

Hunt takes the trouble to reject as oversimplified the national interest approach to understanding foreign policy. He argues that to interpret Chinese foreign policy in terms of national interest and geopolitical realities is to indulge "a strongly judgmental impulse antipathet-

California

From the cool electric gaze of a Hollywood enigma
to the cormorant eating fish at a Muir Beach tide pool,
the state's a deep oasis of appetite and ease.
The newspaper reports eighty quakes a week,
most of them temblors faint as a star on water.
As whole hands of fog drape over the Golden Gate,
a piano in Oakland moans like a choir.
In the High Sierras, falling snow
is blue as brand-new skin;
the world's weight is measured
by a metaphysical Reno as clean as Disneyland.
Closer to Sacramento, the hum of BMWs
on their way to a software convention
sounds tasteful in the rain.
The motel owner knows the desert speed
of screenplays, since he is writing one
in the neon light of a nude but lucid room.
A postmodern bar just opened down the street.
No dancing, no smoking, no alcohol are allowed.
But you can get a mud bath, scented body wrap,
and whales hysterically singing
directly into your headphones.
The county sheriff has a Ph.D. and surfs the internet.
Relations are wreathed with chaos theory
and the "new world order."

As the millennium approaches and nature
politely recedes, everyone thinks good thoughts.
Former cheerleaders join a women's drumming circle.
The family leaves the Methodist Church
for a sweat lodge in the country. In the absence
of the Soviet Union, Satan makes a comeback
along with angels who look like airline stewards,
cheeks rosy with steroids and purpose.
But they're on leave or out of work.
Narcissus drowns in a tide pool while reflecting
on a starfish; Sisyphus rides a mountain bike
up Mt. Tamalpais, where Zeus confuses omniscience
with his remote control. The future oversleeps.
But in a trailer home in Rancho Cucamonga,
the present has a theory scratched as paradise.
Bruise's star is dark.

The bargain was to sing, as populations do,
the terrors of pleasure, like holding the gecko's tail
after it has dropped. Disguised by rear-view worlds,
we have taken steps in just that direction.
Glad the puritans came, we wander back repressed
to the land we would unsettle. Darkness
swallows borders. A wilderness shines.

Paul Hoover

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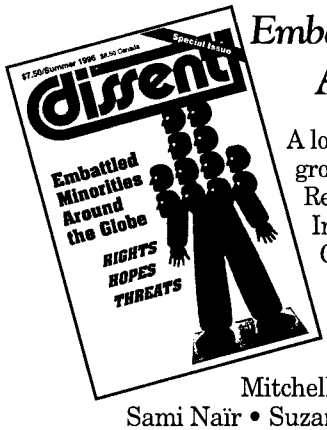
ic to less universal, more culture-specific insights." This statement is puzzling. It seems either to conflate analysis and evaluation, or to accuse others of such a conflation. A national-interest analysis of a country's foreign policy is not necessarily an endorsement of that policy. As in the example of China's actions toward Taiwan, one can label a policy realistic without considering it moral or successful.

Hunt gives the example of China's intervention in the Korean War. He accepts that China intervened in 1950 because its security was threatened by the American drive toward the border, but he feels that a national-interest analysis overlooks the "chaos and contingency" of the decision-making process. He suggests that the national interest approach "becomes often unthinkingly universalistic when scholars discover in countries and cultures other than their own roughly comparable notions of national interest and national security." The problem here is that it is not clear why a policy process that is historically contingent and chaotically human cannot at the same time constitute an attempt to protect national security. Nor is it clear why different cultures cannot perceive the same strategic realities. Hunt risks swinging from a misplaced universalism to an unintended orientalism, according to which other cultures have foreign policy priorities too exotic to be grasped by logic.

In briefly equating realism with "rational actor theory," Hunt confuses things more. This theory uses a stripped-down definition of rationality as the basis for abstract, usually mathematical, examination of consequences of action under defined conditions. Realism as a theory of international relations tries to interpret the intentionality behind foreign policy by analyzing the interests it serves; this is a loose perspective, but as usually employed it is neither judgmental nor culturally biased. So I do not understand Hunt's statement that in the national-interest approach "understanding policy, whatever its complexities, takes a back seat to handing down a clear-cut verdict based on what a 'rational' or 'realistic' actor would have done." It is hard to see how Hunt is doing anything different when he argues, for example, that Mao's policy toward the Soviet Union and the United States in the 1940s was designed to "serve the interests of the CCP."

Hunt criticizes American international relations scholarship for "enshrining" China's handling of deterrent signaling before its entry into the Korean War as a model of "clear, unitary, and ... carefully calculated" deterrence. To be



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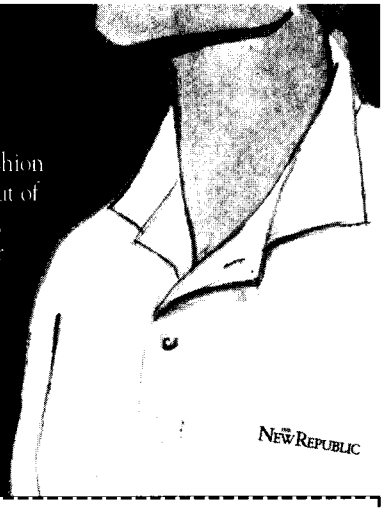

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sure, the book that Hunt cites, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* by Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, was published in 1974, long before new materials became available that enabled Hunt and other scholars to draw a more detailed picture of the Chinese decision-making process. Yet can George and Smoke's conclusion really be faulted?

> In sum, therefore, the miscalculation in this case developed as follows: operating with an incorrect image of the opponent and of his frame of reference, U.S. intelligence analysts and top-level leaders failed to grasp Peking's perception of the threat. As a result, Washington misread Peking's perception of the magnitude of what was at stake. Underestimation of Peking's motivation and of Peking's estimate of its military capabilities, in turn, distorted the U.S. estimate of the way in which Chinese leaders were calculating the risks and deciding what level of risks to accept.

Indeed, Hunt frequently employs a realist approach. He points out that the Chinese population and the Chinese state expanded until they reached geographic barriers that both protected them and prevented further expansion. This argument helps to explain why China today is the size that it is and why it is loath to relinquish any of its peripheral territories like Hong Kong and Taiwan—or Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and Tibet, where by recent reports internal resistance is rapidly growing. Hunt is good on the dilemma presented for China's autonomy in the nineteenth century by the need to learn techniques of self-defense from the same foreigners who were threatening China's independence. He observes that nineteenth-century China used a "foreign policy of maneuver and manipulation" to preserve a large territory with weak resources. It conceded Treaty Port privileges and territory (like Hong Kong and Taiwan) to foreign powers to gain an interlude of peace while it sought foreign technology and equipment to strengthen itself.

Closer to the twentieth century, China's weakness gave rise to patriotism, as it did in other colonized countries. The constitutionalist thinker Liang Qichao argued that the yellow race might be exterminated in the Darwinian struggle for survival. The May Fourth movement protested the post-World War I Japanese assumption of German treaty rights in Shandong. Both the Nationalists and the Communists believed that China's economic, social and political problems came from imperialist exploitation. They saw the Soviet Union as a useful ally against the other imperialists because of its anti-imperialist rhetoric, its relative weakness and its consequent willingness to renounce Czarist privileges in China. As the Soviet economy grew under Stalin, the Chinese communist leaders came to see state planning as a more effective model than capitalism for economic growth in a backward country.

By Hunt's account, foreign policy under Mao was equally realist. It consisted of the "coalition building and diplomatic manipulation and maneuver all so suited to the hard-pressed position often occupied by the weak." It was "a policy of maneuver and suasion," "a flexible, even opportunistic approach to imperialism." Mao resisted Western pressure, maintained an uneasy alliance with the Soviet Union while resisting Soviet attempts to bend China to its will, and endeavored to assert regional and Third World leadership. He spent troops and treasure trying to frustrate American encirclement in Korea and Vietnam. He sought to generate internal support for his policies by informal exchanges with other leaders and by considering domestic as well as international pressures when forming policy. In short, when Hunt looks at the policy process he sees personality, but when he looks at policy itself he sees something that looks much like realism. He speaks the prose of realism without knowing it.

James Shinn's book does not address the theoretical debate, but it is founded in realism and rightly calls for consistency in China policy. Shinn and his colleagues at the Council on Foreign Relations propose ten principles with which we should insist China comply and offer to comply ourselves. They are: no unilateral use of offensive military force; peaceful resolution of territorial disputes; respect for national sovereignty; freedom of navigation; moderation in military force buildup; transparency of military forces; nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction; market access for trade and investment; cooperative solutions for transnational problems; and respect for basic human rights.

The principles are not as anodyne as they seem. Their acceptance would entail major consequences for China. These would include postponement of mainland control over Taiwan until the Taiwanese agreed to it themselves, which would probably be never; prevention of Chinese support for a nuclear deterrent for a close ally, Pakistan, against a potentially nuclear-armed India; opening of Chinese markets on American terms; and the enlistment of China in American-sponsored regional security institutions.

Such changes might be said to serve Chinese security interests. China has a long-term interest, after all, in the development of international regimes. As a relatively weak power compared to the United States, it stands to benefit from regimes which impose limits on stronger powers and which buttress the prerogatives of sovereign states as regime participants and makers. It also has an interest in being present at the creation when regimes are constructed, both to affect the content of the regimes and to exert its presence as a power that counts. It has an interest in seeing that regimes that have come into existence are obeyed, since it is as often the United States as China which flouts them. And it benefits from insisting on the norms of sovereignty and proceduralism, as opposed to the American tendency to unilateral interventions.

Still, such a reading of China's national interest is not that of China's leaders. Although their economy is growing and they would like to become a dominant regional power in the next century, for the next decade or two they see their security situation—their national integrity, their freedom of action and their political way of life—as threatened by the world's sole remaining superpower. Applied to the Taiwan Strait or the South China Sea, principles such as national sovereignty and freedom of navigation as interpreted by Americans would frustrate Chinese goals. China is wary of signing on to regimes of which the United States makes itself both judge and executioner.

This is not a criticism of Shinn's proposal. It is a fact that American and Chinese interests are in conflict on critical points. There are important common interests as well, but they are below the level of abstraction at which Shinn and company reside. As elaborated by Shinn, the ten principles have concrete applications that are fully consistent with American interests and less so with Chinese interests. He proposes that the United States and its allies reward China for complying with the principles and punish it for violating them. The West should push hard in market-opening negotiations such as those involving intellectual property rights and membership in the World Trade Organization. Beyond this, Shinn believes that there is little governments can do to punish China economically, but he thinks that markets will do so automatically and more ruthlessly than any government. In the security realm, the United States should seek Chinese cooperation while remaining prepared

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to confront China when necessary, as Washington did by sending aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait.

Surely China will see this not as a strategy of "conditional engagement," but as a strategy of "conditional containment." No matter. Tensions in the relationship are not created by liking or disliking China, by speaking or not speaking about clashes of interest. The tensions are structural: an established power is attempting to induce a rising power to comply with its preferred norms. The United States will get more from China by the consistent pursuit of its interests than by politicized vacillation that seeks to sound tough at home while placating wounded pride in Beijing.

Shinn argues against linking Most Favored Nation trade treatment with China's human rights performance. MFN conditionality has deteriorated into a bluff that impresses the American public more than the leaders in Beijing. It is a classic case of speaking loudly and carrying a small stick. Although some recommend attaching human rights conditions to China's membership in the World Trade Organization or to World Bank loans, by and large we have disarmed ourselves of economic instruments to penalize Beijing for its pervasive violations of human rights.

And yet we should put human rights rather higher on the list of U.S.-China principles than the tenth position. We have a moral and humanitarian interest in ending what Shinn rightly calls "widespread, brutal, and well documented" violations. And a foreign policy that stresses human rights has a practical utility as well. Human rights are potentially the key to China's evolution into a more rule-abiding regime abroad as well as at home. The rule of law would insulate China from political turmoil; it would prevent policy disasters like the Great Leap Forward of the late 1950s and the dam collapses of the mid-1970s that arose from policy-making under dictatorship; and it would assure that China would be able to cooperate in resolving global issues such as the preservation of the environment. Shinn argues that China should not be held to stricter human rights standards than Indonesia or Vietnam. But it is not the standards that vary. It is the potential impact of China on American and global interests. China is too big and too important to be exempted from human rights criticism, as it was under Mao.

The Chinese government has proven remarkably sensitive to strong, consistent verbal criticism, exposure of violations before United Nations agencies and support for the peaceful activities of Chinese dissidents. The administration needs to speak with one voice on Chinese human rights; in the past the Departments of Commerce and Defense, and even agencies within the State Department, have sent mixed signals. The president and the vice president should publicly condemn human rights violations and personally intervene with Jiang Zemin and other top officials. The administration should employ full-scale, high-level efforts to sponsor and to pass appropriate resolutions at meetings of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, unlike the half-hearted effort that it made this year. We should not schedule high-level political meetings that give face to Chinese leaders except in connection with substantial human rights improvements. More diplomatic effort should be expended on building multilateral support for pressure on China on human rights issues. Expressions of concern by the international business community would also be a powerful instrument.

There is a tendency among American foreign policy realists to view the human rights issue as the skunk at the garden party, as the main reason that American-Chinese relations are not on a smoother track. But the tensions are there anyway. Indeed, it is the other tensions that make human rights so contentious. When the tenor of the relationship was calmer, China engaged in human rights dialogues with the American government, exchanged information, sent delegations to study American human rights theory and released prisoners on American lists. The Chinese now use human rights to punish American negotiators over confrontations involving weapons, Taiwan and trade, and are beginning to bring pressure on American businesses to lobby in Washington to weaken U.S. human rights policy.

Shinn warns that "the United States may be in for several decades of difficult and possibly costly dealings with China as an emerging great power." The American public has little patience for protracted problem-solving, and Congress finds it difficult to support a strategic China policy. Yet a little realism will do America a lot of good. The United States will do better if it recognizes China as a realist power and acts like a realist power itself, not flinching from as consistent a stand on behalf of its interests as the Chinese take on behalf of their own.

ANDREW J. NATHAN is co-author with Robert S. Ross and Steven I. Levine of *The Great Wall and the Empty City: China's Search for Security*, to be published by W.W. Norton next year.

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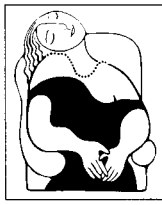
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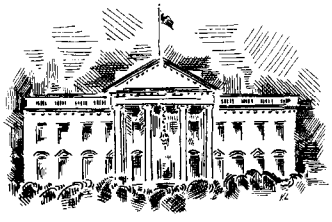
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Live and let lie

"WE LIKE TO THINK HERE THAT those of us who have to stand here and talk to you have high and scrupulous standards for veracity," Michael McCurry thoughtfully remarked at the briefing. And he continued that "I believe everyone in this room who works as a journalist tries to take those same kinds of standards into mind," which came as news to everyone in that room. McCurry, the second-most skilled situationist in the White House, was deploring the corruption of American civilization by Joe Klein. "From time to time I read what Joe Klein writes and I say, 'Yep, that's fiction.' " McCurry, of course, does not traffic in fiction. He is the man who, when asked what the president meant when, in the State of the Union address, he described this age as "an age of possibility," replied with a straight face that it was "a holding-pattern phrase," pending the president's discovery of his own mind. And he is the man who announced in one breath that the Defense of Marriage Act was "gay baiting, pure and simple" and that the president would sign it, and then a few days later announced, again in one breath, that the president was granting Americans the right to sue foreign companies using expropriated American property in Cuba and was suspending the same right. Like the man he serves, McCurry does not lie. You don't need to lie, when everything is true. Klein should have taken a lesson from the subjects of his book. When asked if he wrote it, he should have said that he did and he didn't.

ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN AND women were profoundly offended that Klein had denied his authorship of *Primary Colors*. "A breathtaking act of mendacity," reflected Paul Begala. "Am I surprised that Joe Klein lied?" said James Carville. "No, because in my opinion reporters lie all the time." Dee Dee Myers thundered that "he looked his friends in the eye and he lied—for money." Ann Lewis demanded to know "how would political journalist Joe Klein write about a political figure who behaved that way." Never mind that Klein is not a political figure, that nobody's health or happiness is imperiled by his novel. The grounds of the Clintonites' indignation are transparently political. They hate Klein with a special hatred, because in his coverage of Clinton he broke the Clinton rules in the middle of the Clinton game. When Clinton was one thing, Klein praised him. When Clinton was another thing, Klein denounced him. He refused to admire all the Clintons. Klein's famous disenchantment with the president was based on nothing more controversial than the law of contradiction. He insisted that the president cannot be an old Democrat and a new Democrat at the same time. But the Clintonites have spent the better part of four years making the law of contradiction controversial.



KLEIN'S REVELATION that he is Anonymous has thrown many of his colleagues into transports of ethical theory, and these fits of loftiness are rather more comical. Ed Kosner, fresh from the "Women We Love" issue, instructed that "the integrity of your reporting is a function of your personal integrity." Ken Auletta, a journalist who believes anything that anybody with a cellular telephone tells him, said that he is "angry": "He not only hurts himself, he hurts the business of journalism." "This is a tough one," declared Jonathan Alter, forevermore the man who was convinced that it was Luciano Siracusano. "I can't accept it," said Mario Cuomo, whose job as a talk jock in New York is the most savory of his recent profit-making schemes. "It doesn't make any sense to me." A vice president at CBS worried that "it's impossible to have a relationship with someone . . . who is not telling the truth."

THE CBS GUY IS WRONG ABOUT Klein, but he is onto something. "A relationship with someone who is not telling the truth" is a fine characterization of the journalist's art. The elaborate system of rules by which journalists work—the arcana of "on the record" and "off the record," "for attribution" and "not for attribution," and all the varieties of "background"—are different legitimations of anonymity, different prescriptions for saying less than you know. Journalists are among the many professionals in this derangingly complicated society who are licensed for secrets. And a secret is not a lie. And a lie uttered to keep a secret that one has promised to keep is only the vexing entailment of a perfectly moral and professional commitment. There are circumstances in which it is a matter of honor to lie and thereby to keep a promise, and there are circumstances in which it is a matter of honor to tell the truth and thereby to break a promise. All these grays are lost on our black-and-white, rectitudinous, pathologically truth-telling culture; but there is something especially ridiculous about journalists preening as the humble servants of simple veracity.

JOE KLEIN IS MY FRIEND. A FEW months ago, trapped in traffic on a rainy afternoon in a suburb of Washington, I asked him if he wrote *Primary Colors*. He looked me in the eye and said no. Now I know that he lied. I forgive him, and am delighted for him. I would have lied, too. It was not a lie that in any way did me damage. I have no claim upon the entire contents of my friend's mind. And friendship is not a loyalty test according to which his fidelity to me must be proved by his infidelity to you. There are things about myself, after all, that I wish some to know and others not to know; and I cannot count on a friend to guard my secrets who cannot guard his own. The relationship between confidence and confidentiality is more than etymological.

IT IS NOT ONLY HIS PERSONAL trustworthiness that Klein has demonstrated. It is also his professional trustworthiness. He has what a leaker is looking for. There are "times when I've had to lie to protect a source," he said at his press conference, explaining that this was one of those times. In this instance, of course, the reporter and the source were the same man; and Klein has been mocked for drawing a line between them, for defending himself with the multiplicity of his selves. But this, I suspect, is really the rub. By writing a novel, and by publishing it pseudonymously, Klein was choosing not to behave like a journalist. (A pseudonym is not a lie, it is a device, an ancient convention of another kind of writing.) He was implying that a journalist need not act like a journalist in everything that a journalist does; that journalistic ethics are only the ethics of journalism; that a journalist can carry what he has learned into another realm and then return to the realm of journalism. This is what irks the guild. (Not the six mil, surely. Who dares suggest that journalists are moved by money?) One morning the ornithologists woke to find that one of their company was a bird. He had done something more primary. He had written a small classic of political satire. Primary colors, indeed.

LEON WIESELTIER

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http://home.netscape.com. He's always had a lot of crazy ideas. As a Stanford professor, he mused about making 3-D graphics come alive on desktop computers. But no one listened. So he started *Silicon Graphics* and built it into a multibillion dollar legend. Then he began talking about taming cyberspace. But no one listened. So he handpicked a team of the best hacker talent in the telecosm. And soon after, *Netscape* soared to the highest IPO in market history. Now they listen. **Jim Clark bought his first copy of Forbes as a computer consultant in 1970.**

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